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THE  
DIVINE OFFICE

CONSIDERED FROM A

DEVOTIONAL POINT OF VIEW:

FROM THE FRENCH OF  
M. L'ABBE BACQUEZ,  
DIRECTOR OF THE SEMINARY OF S. SULPICE, PARIS.

EDITED BY THE  
REV. ETHELRED L. TAUNTON,  
OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE OBLATES OF S. CHARLES.

WITH A PREFACE BY HIS EMINENCE  
THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.



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TO  
MY BRETHREN  
IN THE  
CONGREGATION OF THE OBLATES OF S. CHARLES.



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## NOTICE.

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THE Editor, in presenting this work of the learned Abbé Bacquez to the Catholic Public, ventures to hope that it will supply a want long felt among the Clergy and others who have to use the Breviary for a book treating practically of the Divine Office. He has to express his acknowledgments and grateful thanks to Thomas Taunton, Esq., of Hern's Nest, Rugeley, his father, who prepared with great care the first translation. The Editor has advisedly entitled the book "From the French," as he does not profess to give, in all cases, a literal translation, but has adapted the Author's work to English readers.





## P R E F A C E.

---

S. LEONARD of Port Maurice, when asked by a priest to give him a rule of life, said : “ Say your Mass and your Office well ”.

We are all apt to turn from the substance in our hands to the shadows that allure us. To say the Holy Mass, even in the midst of our infirmities, as the Holy Mass ought to be said, would lift us in ascending towards God to a nearness which we can hardly conceive ; for the Holy Mass is a daily renewal of our union with our Divine Master. To say the Divine Office as it ought to be said would fill us with inexhaustible matter of mental prayer, for it is the work of the Holy Ghost and of the Saints. The seven hours are seven visits day by day to the heavenly court ; our voice is united to the Eternal adoration ; and our daily Office ascends in the Golden Censer with the prayers of the Saints.

The translation, therefore, of this most edifying work from the walls of S. Sulpice, the source of so much sacerdotal perfection, comes to us most opportunely, and we heartily commend it to the use of the Clergy and of the Faithful.

HENRY EDWARD,  
CARDINAL ARCHBP. OF WESTMINSTER.

*11th October 1885.*



TO  
PRIESTS AND MINISTERS IN HOLY ORDERS.

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RECEIVE, dear and reverend brethren, this Book which is dedicated to you, and which is addressed directly to you.

It begs your attention ; and the esteem in which you may hold it will not be for the sake of its composition, but for its object and for the end it has in view.

The recitation of the Divine Office is one of your principal obligations—the one you have most frequently to fulfil. I purpose then to make you feel its excellence, its sanctity and its advantages. I will recall the respect with which it inspired all holy priests ; the care they took to acquit themselves of their duty in regard to it ; the dispositions which they brought to its performance, and the pious practices which arose from its use.

After having laid before you the fruits which its recital ought to produce, I will show you the faults which may imperceptibly spoil its effect, and then proceed to indicate their cause and their remedy. Taking, for example, the Prayers we recite each day, I will try to show their meaning and beauty, and so give an idea of the treasures of wisdom and piety which result from a profound study of them. Can there be anything more interesting to you, or with which you can occupy yourselves with greater advantage?

I do not intend to propose any particular doctrine or any new ideas. I shall only repeat what has often been said before, and what you may have read in many books. But there are certain truths which one cannot repeat too often, because we cannot be penetrated too much with the sense of their usefulness. You know, brethren, that recalling to others what they forget, is as useful as teaching them that of which they are ignorant.\* On this point I own that I speak from experience, and admit that it was my own need which opened my eyes to that of my brethren; and if I presume to call their attention to one of their most sacred duties, it is because my own conscience has made me feel the peril of negligence in such matters.

We have all, I doubt not, brethren, a true love for the Divine Office. God instils this sentiment into the souls of Ecclesiastics very early in their vocation—and their education develops it. Nevertheless, does the love which you have for it correspond with the importance and sublimity of its object? Is it deeply considered? Is it enlightened? Is it a *conviction*? All priests see in the recital of the Divine Office an important duty—a serious and pious work. But do they all venerate the prayers of which it is composed as a supernatural work—in one sense divine—as the expression of the most sublime thoughts, of the most noble sentiments which the Spirit of God can produce in beings created to His own image? Do they always think in performing this duty that they are exercising on earth a heavenly work? That they are uniting their voices

\* “Eadem vobis scribere mihi quidem non pigrum, vobis autem necessarium.”—*Philip iii. 1.*



to that numerous choir of which Jesus Christ is the soul and centre? That they give their hearts and their lips to the Holy Ghost Himself in order to praise the Divine Majesty in a manner worthy of His Supreme Greatness? Do they consider when they recite the prayers of the Church as they ascend the holy altar, not only that they glorify God, and gladden the Angels, but that they, as it were, add to the merits of the Sacrifice of our Lord and the fulness of it which He demands of them, and that they work in spreading abroad and upholding the reign of Jesus Christ in the world? That they obtain from heaven and spread around them the graces necessary to nourish Faith, strengthen Hope and quicken Charity; and thus contribute in a most efficacious manner to propagate in souls the supernatural and divine life which our Lord brought with Him to earth, and of which we shall not cease to admire the marvellous trophies in heaven? Do we not often lose sight of these great objects? And, is it not because these thoughts slumber in our hearts that during this holy work—the *Opus Dei*, as S. Benedict calls it—we give way to so much levity, haste and apparent absence of recollection?

As we instinctively esteem this Divine Office, so, doubtless, should we strive to love it. What sacred minister is there but would tell you that one of the happiest days of his life was that on which the Church placed in his hands the breviary? Where is the truly pious priest who has ceased to find its burthen sweet and its yoke light? However, permit me to again put this question, Do we love it always as much as it merits to be loved, and as the saints loved it? Whatever affection it may inspire, would it not become

more dear if we appreciated the fruit it ought to produce? If we but considered that after the Holy Eucharist we have no means more efficacious in order to conform ourselves to the likeness of our Lord and to become imitators of His virtues; if we were convinced that, following the intent of God and the design of the Church, the recitation of the Divine Office is a sort of incessant Communion by which our Lord continues and perfects at all hours of the day, the work of sanctification which He begins each morning in the souls of His ministers; in fine, if we would never forget this truth, that, by dint of speaking to God as His Son spake to Him, of praying as He prayed, of occupying ourselves as He occupied Himself, we should almost infallibly acquire the Spirit of our Divine Master. We should make His sentiments our own, and His thoughts ours: in a word, we should be identified little by little with Him, and become, according to the words of the Apostle, another Jesus Christ, enlightened with His light, loving with His love, and living with His life.

On this point let each one consult his own conscience. For myself, I feel that if these thoughts were always present to my mind I should experience a more constant and more ardent attraction for so holy a labour; and far from being in a hurry to get it over or to defer this duty without sufficient cause, I should endeavour to prolong or resume as speedily as possible so sweet and precious a means of union.

Without being unmindful in any manner of the fervour with which this great duty of Public Prayer is performed, may I not be permitted to believe that some might bring to it a more careful preparation and

a more perfect disposition of mind. For, what is commonly done to acquire the *science* of the Divine Office? What is done to enable oneself to understand its words and penetrate its mysteries? What precautions are taken that this Divine Prayer may not degenerate into a simple lip service, and that this daily obligation, far from becoming an obstacle to piety, shall be always a light to the mind—a stimulus for the heart?

God preserve us from exaggeration, especially when we are finding fault! We know that we must distinguish between the perfection of strict duty and that which is only desirable. We are interested, moreover, in admitting all excuses and all explanations. Nevertheless, to be sincere, we must acknowledge that in this matter we cannot consider ourselves without blame, and far behind what the faithful suppose us to be as regards liturgical instruction, and what our spiritual interests and the honour of the Church require.

Truly, dear and reverend brethren, if it is certain that the Divine Office is esteemed and loved by each of us, it is not to be denied also that in general this estimation of it on our part arises rather from a humble sentiment of deference to the teaching of the doctors of the Church than from a strong and firm conviction proceeding from a study and appreciation of it.

Each year hundreds of young men, full of intelligence and fervour, join our ranks and give themselves to the Church, to serve as mediators between God and man. Are there many among them who have studied the prayers which they are obliged to recite in His name, or who can flatter themselves that they understand and possess their spirit? No, certainly not. This is a height

that few have attained to; and if you look into the matter you will find that there are still fewer who reproach themselves with not having made this preparation, or who in their leisure moments try to supply that which they had neglected during their course of study. They overlook entirely a fault which they have in common with others, and think that custom will remedy the defect; and that in time they cannot fail to acquire sufficient knowledge of that employment to which they ought to consecrate their lives. This is a delusion! For, since study and application are needed to attain to any knowledge, and a mere rapid recitation cannot leave durable impressions on the memory nor a clear understanding in the mind, they continue almost always as ignorant as they were when they began the use of the breviary; and thus many years pass, and perhaps a whole life, without their ever raising the veil or breaking one of the seals of that sacred book which they have had continually in their hands, and which they have read and re-read until they can in a surprising manner repeat the contents even to the smallest details. If such be the case that the spirit and science of the Office is so wanting among us, is it not one of the wants of our day, and one of the best works we can perform, to labour and propagate both the one and the other? Prayer is the principal and the most essential of all duties for the whole Christian people as well as for individuals;—all that weakens it diminishes grace, and threatens to dry up the source of the supernatural life. Thus when we see piety grow cold in many places, and when the faith of great numbers fails or trembles in the balance—when apostolic men are rare—and the Hand

of God scarcely shows Itself during the trials of the Church, it is but natural to fear that we do not invoke Him with sufficient fervour, and for want of due care the fire languishes in His sanctuary, and the prayers of His ministers do not find acceptance in His sight.

This is the moment when we should put to ourselves the question, Have not adorers become cold and ignorant in the science of the temple? Has not this brought about in several places a stupor on souls? Have not the turmoils of the world—its anxieties and cares stifled even in the hearts of priests the voice of the Holy Ghost—its secret desires and interior groanings without which prayer is but an empty sound? Such was the sentiment of a holy bishop and great doctor of the Church—the glory of Carthage. “I have just learnt”—he wrote to his clergy at the time when a persecution was threatening—“and it is in a supernatural manner that I have learnt it, a subject well calculated to humble us. We are reproached with being sluggish in our prayers—with being wanting in ardour and diligence. The Lord strikes us to awaken us.”\* Do we not often see this? Is it not an universal fact or rather a divine Law attested by holy priests in all ages? Since the Passion of our Lord, have not the sleepiness and weariness of the apostles during the prayer of their Divine Master always preceded the trial and foreboded its misfortunes?

You see now, brethren, what feelings have animated me in the composition of this work. I know not whether God will grant me the joy of doing some

\* “*Nam et hoc nobis olim per visionem, fratres carissimi, exprobatum sciatis, quod dormitemus in precibus, nec vigilanter oremus.*”—S. Cypr., *Epist. vii. ad Clerum.*



good by it ; however, I have worked with this hope ; and I can say that the edification of the clergy and the interests of the Church have been my only aim. I may add that the esteem and love of the Divine Office which made me undertake it have been increased by this work ; and my most ardent desire will be to communicate to all my brethren in the sacred ministry the sentiments with which it has pleased God to imbue me.

And you, youthful Levites ! you especially who have recently consecrated to the Lord your heart and your lips, and have a longer time to bless Him here below—I would confirm you for ever in the love and esteem of the Divine Office. You are now full of ardour for prayer. We know it is one of the most visible fruits of the Ordination which you have just received. But, we must think also of the future and secure at all costs your perseverance. Do not waste the Talent which has been entrusted to you ; guard it, exercise it, and make it useful as the principal and pledge of many others. Profit by the peace and liberty you now enjoy to form in yourselves good habits of religion and fervour. That which is easy at first starting will not be so later on. The soul of a priest is a precious metal destined to take the most beautiful form ; but there is but one time favourable for his reception of it. It is when he comes out of the furnace softened and purified by the fires of the Holy Ghost.

And you, Priests of the Lord, who show your zeal in the Church as preachers, directors and pastors of souls, permit me to recall to you the advice of the Apostle to his disciple Timothy. Do not let your piety waste itself in the tumult and distraction of exterior works.

Watch over the interior as over the one thing necessary—"Corporalis exercitatio ad modicum utilis est : pietas autem ad omnia utilis est".\* To sanctify souls it is not sufficient to act—it is not sufficient to exhort. We must pray.†

"Warnings awaken us," says S. Augustine, "Instructions enlighten us, but it is Prayer which changes the heart and converts it." ‡ To neglect the principal exercise—to perform it with coldness is to give up the most sure means of drawing down upon our work the graces and blessings of heaven. But all we, my brethren, whom Jesus Christ has honoured by calling to His Priesthood, whatever may be our functions or our particular duties, do we not sometimes feel the want of a stimulus to revive in us the spirit of prayer? Never has the Church required more than now the assistance of heaven. The watchers of Israel redouble their cries of alarm, and warn us each day of new and unexpected dangers. Around us open war is declared against us, and in our midst there are fallings away, scandals, and mournful divisions. "Foris pugnæ—intus timores." § Ah! it is not enough on the part of a priest to tremble for the Sacred Ark when he sees it exposed to so many dangers! He must employ in its defence all the weapons at his disposal. || If he has not to fight in the

\* *I. Tim. iv. 8.*

† "Manu quidem pugnantes, sed Dominum cordibus orantes prostraverunt non minus triginta quinque millia, præsentîâ Dei magnifice delectati."—*Mach. ii. xv. 27.*

‡ "Ut advertant monemus, ut instruantur docemus, ut mutenter oremus."—*De Verb: Apost. Serm. ii.*

§ *II. Corinth. vii. 5.*

|| "Heli sedebat spectans"—says the Scripture in recalling the death of this good and faithful but indolent Priest—"erat enim cor ejus pro arcâ Dei".—*I*

plains as Josue did, can he not raise his hands with Moses and pray on the mountain? \* And ought not we to be more ardent in invoking the aid of heaven when we see little hope of human help from the powers of this world? “Ædificans Jerusalem Dominus dispersiones Israelis congregabit.” †

Oh God of heaven, Fount of all greatness and Source of all grace, Thou knowest what are our obligations towards Thee, and how we fail in them. Deign to inspire us with the sentiments which our calling demands and our lips express. Give to our souls the Faith of the Patriarchs—the Hope of the Prophets—the Zeal of the Apostles—the Fervour of the Saints—or, rather unite us as they were united with the Saint of Saints, Thy Divine Son. Give us His spirit. Enlightened by His knowledge—burning with His charity, we shall know how to bless Thee with Him, to pray to Thee through Him—to glorify Thee in Him so that He may be in this world as in the next—the only and perfect adorer of Thy Supreme Majesty.—Amen. ‡

*Reg. iv. 13.* Why does he not prostrate himself before the Lord? Why does he not cry out with Moses—“Surge Domine et dissipentur inimici tui”.—*Num. x. 35*, or like the Psalmist—“Surge—tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ”.—*Ps. cxxxi. 8.*

\* “Ibi cecidit ubi deliquit.”—S. Greg. M. *in 1 Reg. iv.*

“Memores estote Moysi servi Domini qui Amalec non ferro pugnando sed precibus sanctis orando dejecit.”—*Judith iv. 13.*

† *Psalm cxlvi. 2.*

‡ “Deus qui plenissimum religionis Spiritum Filio Tuo dedisti ut Te perfecte in Spiritu et veritate pro omnibus adoraret—Concede, quæsumus in nos Ejus effundi Spiritum ut in Ipso et per Ipsum Te in Spiritu et veritate adoremus sicque fiat Unigenitus ille in omnibus Tuæ Majestatis unicus et perfectus Adorator.”—*Office de l'Interieur de N.S.J.C.*



# THE DIVINE OFFICE.

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## FIRST PART.

THE DIVINE OFFICE CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE.

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### BOOK ONE.

*Of the excellence of the Office and of the fruits which it ought to produce.*

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### CHAPTER I.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE DIVINE OFFICE.

THE first condition for performing any work in a proper manner is to feel its importance. We generally neglect that of which we think little ; and the pains we take and the efforts we make are in proportion to the greatness of the end we have in view, and to the desire we have to attain it. Let us then begin by trying to understand the Divine Office : let us try to appreciate its nature, its sense, and its principal characteristics.

To the least religious mind its importance must be

manifest. Suppose the case of one who is a stranger to our Faith. I admit that he may at the first glance only see in this Office a collection of pious readings for the use of the clergy, a summary of dogmas, of morals, and of Christian worship—extracts from the Bible serving for the nourishment of fervour and zeal for the priesthood. But this view of it excites his attention and awakens his interest. What can be more interesting than a work which is an abridgment of the history and doctrine of a Religion more ancient, more universal and possessing greater vitality than any other in this world? What study could be more worthy of our attention than that which shows the supernatural relations between heaven and earth? That is to say—the revelations made by God to man and the homage given by man to God as shown in a book which is so authentic and esteemed. And if we examine the style of its writing what can better charm the taste or satisfy the mind? Where could we find more sublime poetry than in the Psalms—grander eloquence than that of the Prophets—history more varied and touching than that of the ancient people of God—or recitals more pleasant—or more consoling than the legends of the saints? Thus, it is not necessary to have faith in order to admire the Divine Office; for, unless we are without any noble or cultivated ideas we cannot fail to recognise in the whole as in the different parts, rare merit and wonderful design.

But, I would remark, this point of view is not ours. For these somewhat profane considerations, seem to us unworthy of their sacred object. What shows us the excellence of the Divine Office, and what secures for it

all our respect and love, is that it is given to us by God in order to put us in communication with Him ; it is the intercourse which our Priesthood authorises us to have with heaven. It contains the most complete expressions of the praise, thanksgiving and supplications which we have to offer for all the faithful. In a word, it fully justifies its titles of Divine Office and Ecclesiastical Office, the names by which it is known.

# I.

But if divine, how does it merit this title? In several ways. By its primary object : by the source from which it came, and by its arrangement. All in it comes from God and relates to God. The Divine Office being a prayer, it naturally has God for its object. It is the Supreme Majesty the priest addresses whilst performing this duty. It is His greatness which he is blessing—it is His praises he is telling—it is His graces which he invokes—"Constituatur in iis quæ sunt ad Deum."\* —Heb. 1. Now, this consideration is sufficient to raise the Divine Office above all other occupations. For, it is the same with our actions as with our virtues. Their value depends upon the object they have in view. The nobler and greater our object the more we endeavour to reach it—the more we ennoble ourselves by remaining united to it. Then again, it is infinitely grand—ininitely sublime—since it is to God Himself that we raise ourselves as much as possible. This act which we produce is one apart from all others, and with which we cannot compare any which has the

\* "Alia facimus pro Deo ; in hoc autem assistimus Deo, et intendimus Deo et alloquimur Deum."—S. Bonav., *de sex alis Seraph. cviii.*

creature in view, however lawful or excellent we may suppose it to be. This assertion may astonish certain minds, but is not therefore the less true—and it will be sufficient to reflect upon it to recognise its worth. It is the property of Infinite Greatness not only to efface every other greatness, but still more to enrich and raise up in an infinite manner everything that belongs to or is united with it.\*

Consequently to pray to God, to converse with Him, to unite oneself to Him by thought and love—to praise His Perfections and acknowledge His Goodness, is to perform acts of a more excellent, and more sublime order than to govern empires, civilise nations, or to discover new worlds. And, since this Sovereign Being can do nothing grander, more perfect, or more worthy of Himself than to contemplate and love Himself, and because it is in the contemplation and love of Himself that He finds the essential development of His Life; it is impossible that any creature, formed to His Image, can aspire to anything greater or more sublime than to contemplate and bless His Divine Maker. It is in the perfect and unceasing exercise of these acts that all perfection and holiness essentially consist.

But looked at in itself as the Church requires us to do, the Divine Office is not purely a human work—a simple exercise of our personal powers. It is a supernatural act and consequently, in a certain measure, a divine one. God co-operating with us by His Spirit,

\* "Attingere aliquantulum mente Deum magna beatitudo est."—S. Augustine, *de Script. Serm. xcvi.*, No. 5.

"Majus est Angelorum dignitate colloquium miscere cum Deo."—S. Chrys., *De orando Deo*.

is the origin of it more than men. For when a sacred minister acquits himself worthily of his functions, it is not only an intelligent being, a child of Adam, who is thinking of his Creator and invokes Him. It is a child of God, it is a member of His Incarnate Son who addresses himself to his Father with the power and with the rights which the Sacrament of regeneration has conferred upon him. His prayer supposes that between the Spirit of God and himself there is a union of condition and of action which the Incarnation of the Word could alone render possible, and which, next to the Hypostatic union, is the closest of all. He prays by Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ prays by him.\*

It is not his intelligence alone that conceives, nor his will alone that directs, nor is it his action alone that is exerted: the action of the Son of God unites itself to his: the will of his Saviour excites and sustains his will: the Light of the Holy Ghost is added to his intelligence so that the homage offered to God is the effect of a double principle, and therefore, at the same time, that it belongs to His minister it belongs also to the Spirit of His Son, and to the Holy Ghost without which it could not be produced, and from whom it derives a value and a dignity quite divine.†

If then the least prayer from the moment it raises us

\* "Christus Jesus tanquam caput in membra et tanquam Vitis in palmites virtutem influit."—Concil. Trid. *Sess. vi., c. xvi.*

† "Divinæ consors factus naturæ memento cujus corporis et cujus capitis sis membrum."—S. Leon., *de Nativ. Dom.*

† "Qui autem adhæret Domino, unus spiritus est."—*I. Cor. vi. 17.*

"Ipse Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus. Qui autem scrutatur corda, scit quid desideret Spiritus."—*Rom. viii. 27.*

"Hominis opera quæ a Spiritu sancti aguntur magis dicuntur esse opera Spiritus sancti quam ipsius hominis."—*1<sup>a</sup>, 2<sup>a</sup>. q. 98, a 6, ad. 1.*

up to God is, of its nature, so noble, what must we think of those which include the actions of our Lord as much as our own, and of which His Spirit alone can render us capable? Evidently whatever distance there is between an ordinary action and the most sublime of our moral capabilities, there is a still greater between this act and the least of the supernatural works of our Lord living in us and working in us.\* This is not all. Divine in its principle as in its end, the Divine Office is especially so in a visible manner in its external form and in its expression.

In fact, the Holy Ghost does not confine Himself to acting on our souls in inspiring us with His sentiments and His thoughts. He dictates to us even our expressions ; or rather it is by lending us His language, by putting His words on our lips, in tracing by and through His Church the expressions which best interpret the sentiments with which He filled our Divine Head, that He unites us to Him—that He associates us with His views and desires ; and that in fine He creates in our souls those pious emotions, those holy aspirations which the sovereign Goodness cannot resist.

Thus, in a work so august nothing is left to chance ; the Holy Ghost Himself does all that is possible to be done. He begins by praising God the Father in His Incarnate Son. He expresses His thoughts in the writings of the Prophets, and His sentiments in their Psalms and Canticles, and from these He inspires the

\* "All bodies," says Pascal, "the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms are not equal in value to the meanest intellect. And all the bodies and all the minds together with all their productions are not to be compared with the smallest emotion of love ; for it is of an order infinitely higher than they."—*Pensées, Part xi., art. 10.*



Church to form a prayer, and to impose its recitation upon all Her ministers.\* When, then, a cleric worthily performs the Divine Office, it is as it were another Jesus Christ—another Son of God, who addresses himself to his Father with the same spirit and in the same language. It is the Lord who praises Himself on earth as He praises Himself in heaven, and in the manner which answers best to His infinite greatness.†

It was, assuredly, His Will that it should be thus. For from the first time our Lord began to preach He taught His disciples an admirable prayer; the most divine of all prayers, which we so often have the consolation of repeating. Is it not then fitting that He should extend this grace, and should complete it in favour of His ministers? Since He specially imposed on His representatives the duty of prayer, and as He intended them to pray for all, and that in a more perfect manner; did not the Divine Master engage them to it, as it were, by motives of peculiar confidence? And could He give them more powerful proofs of it than by putting on their lips His own words, and thus so to say uniting them in a sure and constant manner to His Divine Spirit?

However this may be, it is what He has done, and what we see realised in the Church. Everywhere His ministers pray. They pray in common and in a uniform manner. Nor is it a human language, nor is it the hymns of Angels that escape from their hearts. No!

\* "Ut bene hominibus laudetur Deus laudavit se ipse Deus."—S. Aug., *Tract. vii. in Joan.*

† "Dixit Dominus cujus ignis est in Sion, et caminus ejus in Jerusalem."—*Isaïæ xxxi. 9.*

These accents are divine. How, then, can heaven be insensible to them? How, then, can they themselves fail to hold in esteem and respect so great and holy a work?

## II.

The Office, then, is truly Divine, and we cannot dispute its claim to the title. But it is also Ecclesiastical. What is the sense then and reason of these names?

It is easy to understand. The Church, forming a society—a society the most perfect next to that of the Blessed, owes to God a public homage—a tribute of praise and of supplication. She is the more bound to this as She expects and receives from heaven the greatest favours. Moreover, it is not possible that the faithful of whom She is composed should all take an equal part in the accomplishment of this duty; for, the greater part are as incapable of worthily discharging it, as they are of fulfilling other functions incompatible with it. It is necessary then to bind with this obligation some chosen and devoted members whom She constitutes Her representatives before God, and whom She delegates to bless Him in Her name and invoke Him in all Her needs.

This is the object—this is the nature of the ecclesiastical office. He who is engaged in carrying out this duty may perhaps be alone, and appear to be by himself; but it is as a public character—as a minister of the Church, and therefore as representing the faithful, whom he offers to God, that he performs this office. It is his lips indeed that pronounce these holy words. It is his soul that conceives these thoughts and the love expressed by them, but they are dictated to him and prescribed to him by



the Church. So that if he bless—if he offer thanksgiving—if he solicit—it is in the name of the Church that he does it; and we can say that it is the Church that petitions, blesses, and offers up thanksgiving.\*

Nor is it to be feared that the minister should turn to his personal advantage what is designed for the common good. For, the desires which he expresses are uttered for all, and the Spirit of our Lord, which animates his words and gives them their value, remains always the same; they cannot make any exception. Moreover, did he restrict by his positive will the mediation with which he is charged, the design of the Church would be accomplished all the same. God would always see in the words of the 'Office' a certain proof of the wish of His spouse, and He would hear this prayer according to Her intention and merits—as He always accepts, in a certain manner, the oblation of the Mass according to the intentions of those who cause it to be offered, independently of the dispositions or personal views of the priest who celebrates.

Thus the Divine Office is not a purely personal act. It is a common prayer, whose principal author here below is the Universal Church, the fruits of which all its members ought to reap. He then who acquits himself of this act, puts himself in relation with his brethren,

\* "Officium dicitur ab efficiendo : quod est faciendum aut exsequendum."—Benedict XIV., *Institut.* xxiv. 2.

"Definiri potest : Certa ratio laudandi precandique Deum mente simul ac voce, auctoritate Præsulum Ecclesiæ instituta."—Bellarm. *Controv.*, iii. de *Bon-Op.* ; de *Orat.* 1, 1, cx.

"Solus autem S. Pontifex, habet potestatem constituendi hoc ministerium deprecandi nomine totius ecclesiæ, et illud committendi sacerdotibus et ministris."—Suarez. de *Hor. Can. C.* 1, No. 11.

and at the same time with God : he becomes their interpreter and their spokesman.\*

How grand, how magnificent is this thought ! How it should raise the soul of an ecclesiastic—make him esteem his ministry—fill him with zeal, fervour, and confidence ! It is not in my name, ought he to say, but in the name of the Church—it is for all Its members that I have to praise God—to bless Him, and render Him thanks ! And as the Church of Jesus Christ ought to praise God for all creatures, and as it is by them that the Lord expects the honour which He ought to receive from the works of His Hand, so at the same time that I, His priest, pray for all the faithful, ought I also to pray for all men—for all creatures—for the entire universe : for I am then as it were the heart, soul, and voice of all creation† : like the Angel of whom it is spoken in the Apocalypse, always standing before the Altar in heaven—"to gather into his censer the prayers," and to make them ascend as an agreeable odour before the throne of God.‡

If this thought fills me with fear, remembering my weakness, it at the same time exalts me and gives me confidence by reminding me that it is not me alone that God considers, but Holy Church accepting me as Her interpreter, He does not look upon my imperfections, nor upon my faults, but regards the faith and the merits of His spouse which rule Her conduct ; and that in the

\* "Sacerdos publica persona et totius Ecclesiæ os."—S. Bernard, *Serm.* xx.

† "Labium electum."—*Soph.* iii. 9.

‡ "Data sunt illi incensa multa ut daret de orationibus sanctorum omnium super altare aureum, quod est ante thronum Dei."—*Apoc.* viii. 3.

Cf. *Par.* xxxiii. et II. *Par.* xxxi.

'Office' as at the altar I am authorised to say: "Domine ne respicias peccata mea sed fidem Ecclesiæ Tuæ".

Thus it is that the "Divine Office" looked at from this point takes so grand and noble a character, and yet how much more exalted and more noble is it when we consider the sanctity and the fervour of the multitudes who have consecrated their lives to it! What a beautiful sight! What a magnificent harmony! It is not a monastery of Monks only who are constantly succeeding each other in the sanctuary in order never to interrupt their song of the divine praises; it is not as formerly the Thebaid, where the canticles and psalms constantly resounded. It is the whole world which appears like a vast temple, in which voices without number repeat unanimously, and without ever wearying, the same accents of adoration, of gratitude, and of supplication.\*

\* "Secundum nomen tuum sic et laus tua in fines terræ,"—*Ps. xlvii. 11.*

A great many founders of Orders or monasteries had at heart the wish to establish on earth a perpetual psalmody like that in heaven. It was this that blessed Alexander proposed in the East (*M. 443, Acta Sanct. 15 Jan.*). Sigismand at Agaune (*523, Act. Sanct. 1 Maii*). King Goutran to S. Benirigne of Dijon (*M. 592, Act. Sanct. 28 Mart.*). S. Colomban at Luxuel (*M. 615, Act. Sanct.*). See S. Bern. Praise of S. Malach. S. Richard or Achard at Jumieges (*M. 687, Act. Sanct. 15 Sept.*). S. Boniface at Fulda (*M. 754*). In this last-named monastery, as in that of Messein in Saxony, and at Ethal in Bavaria, they had the consolation to have the psalmody last without interruption during more than three hundred years. The religious divided into different bands, succeeded each other in the choir, so that they sang continually the praises of God all night as well as all day. The accomplishment of this beautiful design was reserved to the Catholic Church, and was to be the portion and honour of Her clergy. Uniting in Her bosom like heaven, of which She is the image, all the diversity of the seasons, She celebrates at the same time, without relaxing and without confusion, the hours of the Divine Office; and there is not a single moment wherein She does not send up to the Divine Majesty the accents of public prayer: "En illa sedes cœlitum semper resultat laudibus . . . Illi canentes almæ Sionis æmuli" (*Hymn. dedicat ad laud.*).—

It is by day, by night, from all parts of the earth as well as at every moment of time that this prayer mounts to the throne of God—" *Dies diei eructat verbum et nox nocti indicat scientiam.*"—Psalm xviii. 3. From the first ages when it pleased heaven to inspire the Church with this sublime institution there has not passed a day nor even an hour wherein this union of so many souls, the concurrence of so many hearts, when lips consecrated to the Lord have been silent, or the sacrifice of praise has ceased to unite itself to the Eucharistic Sacrifice in order to proclaim the Perfections of the Divine Majesty.

An imperfect image, doubtless, but one that is already charming the heavenly City, where is heard a voice coming from the throne of the Godhead—that is to say, from the Humanity of the Saviour—demanding from the angels and saints, hymns and canticles; and another voice loud as the thunder and mighty as the waves of the sea answers and repeats without ceasing—"Alleluia! The Lord our God reigneth with might; shout with joy and celebrate His Greatness".\* The sacred ministers are then as the angels of God on earth, and when engaged in the Divine Office they imitate the heavenly spirits and unite themselves to their most sublime functions.

*Cf. Grancolas, de l'office divin. "Laus perennis."*—D. Calmet, *Comment on the rule of S. Benedict.* Frenicle, *Explanation of Ceremonies and Offices, Vol. I—On the perpetuity and succession of offices.*

\* "Et audivi quasi vocem turbæ magnæ et sicut vocem aquarum multarum dicentium: Alleluia! quoniam regnavit Dominus Deus omnipotens."—*Apoc. xix. 6.*

"Et requiem non habebant die ac nocte dicentes: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Omnipotens Qui erat, et Qui est et Qui venturus est."—*Ibid., iv. 8.*

Again, the Church does not confide this holy duty to every kind of person. For as it is a question of offering to God a sacrifice of praise—a daily sacrifice in which body and soul must take part—she carefully chooses those whose virtues render them worthy to serve at the altar in the oblation of the divine victim. Nor does she accept them as her spokesmen until she has received their solemn promise to persevere until death in a state of purity so perfect as to give to the soul all its liberty and to prayer all its fervour.\*

Happy then are those who render themselves worthy of such a ministry! Happy those whom the Lord places in His sanctuary to bless and invoke Him all their days! Whilst worldlings labour to secure for themselves this changeable earth—whilst they dispute for some apparent or frivolous honour—whilst they torment and exhaust themselves to satisfy some capricious master, these privileged friends of God already living the life of heaven, have only to praise and glorify like the angels the King of Heaven and His infinite perfections

\* "Quod facultatem præbeat sine impedimento Dominum obsecrandi."—*1 Cor. viii. 35.*

What a wonderful agreement between the revealed doctrine and the practice of the Church and confirmed in a striking manner by the histories of heretical sects! What has become of the Divine Office in the hands of the reformed clergy? Secularised by marriage they have rejected it at the same time as celibacy, and, according to S. Paul, they take from God all the love they give to creatures. *Qui sine uxore est sollicitus est quæ Domini sunt quomodo placeat Deo; qui autem cum uxore est, sollicitus est quæ sunt mundi quomodo placeat uxori et divisus est.*—*1 Cor. vii. 32.* Men of prayer are only found among the band of virgins; and those alone can sing the canticles of the Lamb who partake of His purity—*Nemo poterat dicere canticum nisi qui empti sunt de terra; virgines enim sunt.*—*Apoc. xiv. 4.*

On the objections made by Protestants to the Breviary, see Bellarm. *Controv. iii., de bonis operibus de orat. 1, 1, c. ix.*

—"Erunt sicut angeli Dei in cælis."—Marc xii. 25.\* Their prayers will be prolonged here below. Commencing on the day of their ordination they cease not until their last hour, when, seeing Him Whom for so long a time they have celebrated through Faith, they will begin to sing with the elect, the triumphant canticle,† which will last for all eternity.—"Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine ; in sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te."—Ps. lxxxiii. 5.‡

\* "Amare et laudare Deum ; laudare in amore, amare in laudibus."—S. Aug. in *Psalm cxlvii.*

† "Canticum Moysi et canticum Agni."—*Apoc. xv. 3.*

‡ Many ecclesiastics have considered it a great favour of heaven that they were able to say the Divine Office up to the last day of their life. Navarre, uncle of S. Francis Xavier, congratulated himself on having omitted his office only once or twice although he was 70 years of age ; and that, too, when he had been five times in danger of death.—*Enchirid Confess. cxxv., No. 100 et c. xi., No. 35.* S. Gregory of Tours, in the history which he has left us of his uncle, S. Gal, Bishop of Claremont, tells us that this pious bishop consecrated his last days to this devotion. Finding his strength failing he made an effort to recite once more the Matins of the day—but it was his last.—"Consummavit Officium totum matutini temporis. Quo jam extremo defunctus officio, ait : 'valedicimus vobis fratres !' et hæc dicens extensis membrum spiritum Deo intentum præmisit ad Dominum."—*Vita Patr. vi., Act. Sanct. 1 Julii.* The histories of S. Paulinus, of S. Benedict d' Ancani, of S. Bruno, of S. Oswald of York, of S. James of Venice, &c., show the same features. The life of Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius terminates thus—"Primam Tertiam et Sextam cum assistente devotissime recitavit. Cum autem Nonam ventum esset—'sufficit' ! inquit. 'Jam non dicemus Nonam nisi forte cum angelis in cælis.'"—*Romæ, 1587.*



## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE FRUITS OF THE DIVINE OFFICE.

#### I.

IF anything could increase our esteem for the Divine Office it would be the thought of the profits which result from it to the Church as well as to ourselves. For, besides the individual wants of each of Her members—the Church considered as the mystical body of Our Lord, has needs of the greatest importance whether regarded in relation to the gravity of the interests they involve or as they affect the extent of the helps which they demand. These we do not undertake to enumerate ; it will be enough to name the most apparent in order to show Her dependence upon heaven, and how indispensable to Her is the aid of grace.

Before all, the Church requires pastors and ministers. The Sovereign Pontiff—the Bishops and Priests are to Her what the head and the principal organs are to the body. It is through them that She receives life and movement. It is they who enlighten, guide and defend Her. On their virtue, their wisdom, and unity of spirit depends Her strength and to a certain degree Her very existence. Then, who but God could give Her pastors and ministers? Who but He is capable of forming

them, of sanctifying them, and of rendering them worthy of their vocation? \*

But She also requires saints; that is to say, fervent and generous souls sincerely devoted to their respective states and thus practising Christian perfection. Before all, the Church requires Her pastors and ministers to be men after God's own heart. For if the life of the Church is in Her hierarchy, Her prosperity and Her glory are in Her saints. It is they who complete the teaching of Her pastors and render it efficacious. They are not content with making known the virtues of humility, of mortification, of penance, and of self-sacrifice; the saints make them loved by their practice of them. Heroic vocations are their portion no less than the gift of miracles. It is among Her saints that the preachers of the gospel—devoted missionaries—fervent religious—the champions and martyrs of the Faith are found. It is by them that piety is stirred up—conversions wrought—institutions founded or revived, and that the wonders of the first ages are renewed. But the world far from being able to form such men is not even capable of understanding them. No, it is God Who raises them up for the salvation of their brethren and for the glory of His name.†

Another condition necessary for the good of the Church is union between Her members and peace with the powers of the world. As She only subsists by unity in government and oneness of faith, so agreement of mind and heart within Herself is an absolute necessity for

\* *I. Cor. xii. 28. II. Cor. iii. 6.*

† "In monte Sion erit Salvatio; et erit sanctus."—*Abdiæ 17. Dan. ii. 20; I. Cor. xii.*



Her. Without subordination and concord among Her members She would break up and fall to pieces. With regard to external powers and temporal government their agreement with Her is not essential ; for experience has shown that She can resist their attacks and triumph over their enmity. Nevertheless, for the sake of the world itself, She desires to be at peace with princes. She requires the liberty given to Her by Her Master in order to teach His doctrine—to exercise His worship and to live His life : and She asks to be respected if not protected. But it is to heaven specially that She makes this demand.\* She knows well that peace and unity are not the fruit of human passions ; that God alone is capable of keeping in unity so many divergent interests and of imposing upon the powers of the world respect for Truth and virtue. Behold then three things of capital importance which the Church must expect from heaven. If Her prosperity depended upon no other condition, would it not suffice to place it each moment and in a thousand ways at the disposition of Divine Providence? Her wants are not only constant they are immense. Each of them is bound up with a multitude of special difficulties and requires innumerable graces to meet it. Moreover it is a general law and a fundamental maxim of religion that all creatures are bound

\* “Obsecro primum omnium fieri obsecrationes, orationes pro omnibus hominibus pro regibus, et omnibus qui in sublimitate sunt, ut quietam et tranquillam vitam agamus in omni pietate et castitate.”—*I. Tim. ii. 1, 2.*

The Church has remained faithful to this advice of the Apostle. She prays in the Office as well as at Mass—“Ut hostium sublata formidine, tempora sint divina protectione tranquilla”.—*Orat. pro pace.* “Ut destructis adversitatibus et erroribus universis Ecclesia secure Deo serviat libertate.”—*Orat. Comm.* “Ut et mundi cursus pacifice dirigatur, et Ecclesia tranquilla devotione lætetur”—*IV. Dom. post Pent.*

to invoke the help of God in proportion to their needs of which they are conscious. Our Lord consents to give us all that is necessary; He has even promised to refuse nothing that can aid us to attain our desired end, but He requires strictly that we should ask for His assistance, and He distributes His gifts according to the perseverance and ardour of our prayers.\* The Church Herself is submissive to this rule which She lays on the faithful; and She is obliged to give them the example by being the first to conform to it—" *Super muros tuos, Jerusalem, constitui custodes,*" says the Holy Ghost in Isaias, "*tota die et tota nocte in perpetuum non tacebunt*".† This is why She has been ever praying, and does not cease to require Her ministers to pray. She charges them to praise God in Her name; it is Her first care in the Divine Office, as it was that of our Lord in the prayer which He has taught us. But, following the example of the same Master, She wills that we should entreat Him after we have praised Him and thus ask the aid of heaven in Her favour. She is convinced that these prayers exert a great influence on the leadings of Divine Providence in Her regard; and that graces come to Her more abundantly and in a more striking manner in proportion as they are asked for with piety and fervour.

It is not that She despises the suffrages of the faithful. She recognises and proclaims their value (Matt. vii. 7); still, these private prayers do not form the principal foundation of Her confidence. She knows well

\* "Petite et dabitur vobis."—*Luc. xi. 9.*—"Non habetis, propter quod non postulatis."—*Jac. iv. 2. Concil. Trid. Sess. vi. cxi.*

† *Isaiæ lxxvii. 6.*

that they are often fervent, being personal and spontaneous, but they are infrequent and out of proportion to their wants. She knows also that depending upon variable or feeble inspirations and on uncertain co-operation, they cannot combine the special spirit that characterises the prayer of Her ministers, and which give to *their* intercession a sovereign efficacy. (S. Liguori, on the celebration of the Mass and recital of the Office.)

That which distinguishes the prayer of the Divine Office is its Catholicity, like that of the Church from which it has its origin. That is to say, it joins the most perfect unity with the greatest diffusion throughout time and space.\* It is this also which recommends it to God and assures its success. For, if there is in the Holy Bible a general promise to those who pray, there are found in it particular assurances in favour of those who are united and assiduous in the exercise of prayer. "Whatever you ask my Father," said our Saviour, "and you agree together, you shall obtain it, for I am always with you and with those who are united in my name."† If it is enough that two or three of His disciples should unite in His name, and ask a favour of His Father, so that He should join them and give an infallible efficacy to their prayers, how can He be deaf to the prayers of His ministers when He sees so many thousands uniting themselves in the closest manner with Him and succeeding each other without interruption, and imploring with one heart and one voice, the Divine Mercy upon

\* "Vox sermonum ejus ut vox multitudinis."—*Dan. x. 6.*

† "Si duo ex vobis consenserint de omni re quacumque petierint, fiat illis a Patre meo; ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum."—*Matt. xiii. 19.*

His dearly loved creatures? \* It is with difficulty, says the Apostle, that God can resist the prayer of the just when made with earnestness: *Multum valet deprecatio justī assidua*.† If assiduity in prayer can give to the desire of one soul such power that she becomes strong against God Himself, what then can resist the prayer of the Church, that prayer of each day and of each hour, which for so many ages, *semper et ubique*, expresses to heaven the same desires and makes the same supplications? ‡

## II.

The character of public ambassador which the priest assumes whilst engaged in this function does not deprive him of the individuality of his action. He can always

\* "Si juxta ipsius Salvatoris promissionem duobus ob quamlibet causam convenientibus, quodcumque petierint dabitur illis, quid si tanti populi convenientis una vox proferatur—qua Deo dicent—Amen?"—S. Athanas., *Apol. ad Imp. Constant. xvi.*

† "Multi animi dum congregantur unanimes, fiunt magni, et multorum preces impossibile est contemni."—S. Ambros. *de Prec.*

‡ "Coimus ad Deum quasi manu facta precationibus ambiamus. Hæc vis Deo grata est."—Tert. *Apol. xxxix.*

† This conviction of the power of prayer acquired by unity and perpetuity is the cause of so many associations and confraternities. But what association is comparable for numbers and duration to those hundreds of thousands of priests scattered all over the world, constantly saying together the same prayers for the same ends at all hours of the day? Nothing renders the Church more formidable to Her enemies than prayer like this—nothing which gives Her more the aspect of an army *in battle array*.

‡ S. Chrysostom speaking of public prayer cites in proof of its efficacy, S. Peter taken out of prison, and remarks upon the reason given by S. Luke for this miraculous deliverance—"Oratio fiebat sine intermissione ab ecclesia ad Deum pro eo."—*Acts xii. 5.* "Quid hæc oratione fortius quæ columnam et Ecclesiæ turrim adjuvat?" the holy doctor adds. "Non frustra oravit ecclesia," says S. Augustine, "crediderunt et qui persequabantur."—*Serm. cix., de Temp.*

merit for himself; he can always join to his prayer a personal intention, and thus apply it in a special manner to his own wants, or to the wants of those who are dear to him. In this way we understand these words of Scripture: *Qui seminat in benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet.\**

To ask for others is, according to S. Gregory, the true method of obtaining for ourselves.† Moreover, prayer being the most excellent of works, has on this ground a peculiar and great merit before God. "A single psalm well recited," says S. Liguori, "excites all the powers of the soul, and causes us to produce a hundred acts of virtue. One 'Hour' said with devotion implies at the bottom of the heart a thousand good desires, a thousand pious affections."‡ What merits then what graces does not that ecclesiastic gain who full of esteem for his 'Office,' produces interiorly each act his lips may utter; and who understands how to appropriate to himself those desires, supplications, and thanksgivings of which the Church has made him the mouthpiece! And if charity leads him to pray specially for some particular souls, or to join in his prayers the interests of others, what influence with God shall there not be found in the intercession of a man accustomed so often to approach Him, and speak to Him as it were heart to heart? *Ne timeas Paule*, said the Angel of the Lord to the Apostle, whilst he watched and prayed the

\* *II. Cor. ix. 6*—"De fructu oris sui homo satiabitur bonis." *Prov. xiii. 2*—"Quoniam debet in spe qui arat arare, in spe fructus percipiendi." *1 Cor. ix. 10.*

† "Plus enim por se valere preces suas efficit qui has et pro aliis impendit." S. Greg. *Magn. Moral. I. xxv.*; in *Job. xlii. 21.* Dominus conversus est cum oraret Job pro amicis suis.

‡ *The Psalms, for the use of those bound to recite the Divine Office.* *Introd.*



night through in the midst of dangers, *ecce donavit tibi Deus omnes qui navigant tecum*.\*

Let us not further insist upon this advantage—common to all prayers, and generally appreciated. There is another peculiar to the recitation of the Divine Office which it is important to mention. It preserves in us the spirit of our vocation, and is a pledge of our perseverance and progress in the sacerdotal life.

One of the greatest dangers of the ministry is dissipation of mind. The exterior exercises in which we are obliged to take part tend more or less to weaken the spirit of piety and retirement. It is so difficult to be occupied with creatures and not to forget God—to mix ourselves up with the world without losing sight of heaven. The best preservative a priest can have against these distractions is to be found in the Divine Office. Several times a day, and for a considerable time, the priest must cease his intercourse with men and withdraw into silence and solitude; there, however little esteem he may feel for his duty or zeal in the discharge of it, he retires within himself; he recalls all the powers of his mind to fix them on God and His Perfections—Jesus Christ and His mysteries—the Saints and their virtues. Thus Faith is exercise and develops itself. The grand images of the invisible world which dissipation tends to efface now maintain their hold on the soul, or enable it to feel again their influence. Thus, following the desire of the Apostle, we repair without ceasing in this intercourse with God the losses we are exposed to during our unavoidable mingling with the world: *Verbum Dei habitat in vobis abundanter docentes, et admonentes vos*

\* *Act. xxvii. 23, 24.*

*metipsos in psalmis, hymnis et canticis spiritualibus, in gratia cantantes in cordibus vestris Deo.\**

Another danger to which ecclesiastics are exposed and which always accompanies dissipation of mind, is the danger of becoming imbued with the sentiments of the less perfect persons with whom they live, and of allowing themselves to be carried away by their example. For as material objects ever tend by mutual contact to acquire the same temperature, and that the more rapidly the closer their contact—so is it with souls, which always seek to communicate to others their own qualities be they good or bad. Obligated to live in the midst of the world which he ought to enlighten and purify—constantly surrounded by lax or vicious men—having constantly under his eyes the sight of all kinds of disorders and miseries, the priest is exposed at the same time to lose those supernatural sentiments with which he ought to inspire others—namely, a horror of sin, an esteem for virtue, and a love of perfection; and on the other hand, to imbibe the corrupt spirit of the age, and the passions and prejudices of the followers of the world.

How, then, may we escape this peril? One of the most powerful means which Providence affords us is the fervent and worthy recitation of the Divine Office. Who cannot see how admirably this practice is fitted to guard us from the corrupting influence of the world? At each hour of the day the Divine Office takes us away from the seductions in the midst of which we live, and it transports us from the vitiated air of the world into a region pure and heavenly. There our souls

\* *Coloss. iii. 16.*

breathe freely the air that suits us, the spirit of Faith, of religion, of charity and zeal. There we enter into relation with God—with our Saviour and with the just, and there we converse with them.\* There the soul is as it were on Thabor, far up above the world, and near enough to heaven to hear the words of the Eternal Father and to contemplate with her Divine Saviour, in a brightness which ordinary men could not endure, the Law and the Prophets. There she recalls to mind the divine precepts—she hears the evangelical counsels of perfection; she honours the virtues of the saints; and more than this—she enters into their thoughts and sentiments; and unites in their petitions as well as in their thanksgivings.† Thus is the sacerdotal spirit preserved; thus the edifying spectacle of the city of God neutralises in us the scandal of the city of the world; thus may be accomplished the recommendation of the Apostle—*In medio nationis pravæ et perversæ lucetis sicut luminaria in mundo, verbum vitæ continentes.*‡

It is related in the life of S. Joseph of Cupertino, that humble monk of the seventeenth century upon

\* “Sacrificium laudis honorificabit me, et illic iter quo ostendam illi salutare Dei.”—*Ps. xlix. 23.* “Ideo ab omnibus curis atque negotiis, certis mentem revocamus, verbis orationis nosmetipsos admonentes, ne quod tepescere cœperat omnino frigescat.”—S. August., *Ep. cxxi. sub fin.* “In quantum homo per divinam laudem ascendit in Deum, in tantum per hoc retrahitur ab his quæ sunt contra Deum secundum illud Isaïæ:—*Laude mea infrænabo te ne intereas.*”—S. Thom. 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>æ</sup>, q. 91, a. 1.

† An ancient tradition narrates that in the solitude of Sainte Baume, S. Magdalen was wrapt up seven times a day to heaven where it was given her to listen to the Canticles of Angels and to unite in concert with them.—29 July, V. leg. Is it not the same privilege which the Church obtains for Her ministers in calling upon them seven times a day to celebrate the praises of the Father in the words of the Holy Ghost and in the society of the elect?

‡ *Philip i. 15.*



whom it pleased God to pour down such wonderful gifts—that being one day consulted by a prelate, Mgr. Claver, bishop-elect of Potenza, upon the means to be taken for the reformation of his clergy and for maintaining in them the spirit of their vocation—the saint merely replied—"My Lord, if you desire to sanctify your priests, endeavour to obtain from them these two things:—that they shall say the Office piously, and celebrate Mass with fervour. Nothing more is required to assure their salvation." \* In fact, it was to these two exercises that this holy religious devoted his days. He knew of no pious book to equal the Breviary, his delight was to recite its prayers and meditate on its words. Therein he said he found light for his mind and food for his soul.

We are able to cite an example of quite a contrary but not less striking effect. There was lately among us a priest whom all admired for his genius, and whom many venerated for his virtues. Without any rank in the hierarchy but that of a simple priest, he rose above all by his zeal as well as by his talent, and he seemed destined to procure for the Church a triumph over Her greatest enemy—religious indifference. How then came it to pass that the hopes he raised were blighted, and so promising and glorious a career was to have so fatal an end? God alone knows by what degrees the interior fall was effected, and what was its primary cause; but there are some—grave and enlightened men—who, when they heard that this priest prayed not as his brethren did, and that regarding the Office as a hinderance to his ministry he had, in

\* *Life of the Saint*, by D. Bernini, cxii. Rome, 1722.

order to serve in a better manner the Church, obtained permission to be relieved from this tribute to God—thought they could trace the calamity to its source. Whether they were right or wrong in their conjecture, this much may be undoubtedly said, that, in leaving his Breviary, this priest deprived himself of a great assistance, and of a grace attached to his condition, which the Church judges to be generally necessary to Her ministers; and further, had he, like so many holy and illustrious ecclesiastics, devoted a portion of his daily life to secret prayer, instead of seeking the world's admiration for his talents and learning, he would have acquired so much the more merit, and have obtained so much more grace, by the practice of humility. In fine, such a fall as his is for every prudent priest a reason the more for cherishing a love for his 'Office,' and for thanking the Church for having with so strict a command laid it on her ministers, affording them at the same time so powerful a preservative and so salutary an occupation.\*

At the same time it is saying but little, to say it is a guarantee for perseverance; the 'Office' is likewise one of the most efficacious means of sacerdotal perfection. In truth, the Office has only been composed

\* This fact, of which we feel assured, is confirmed by the testimony of M. Ladoue in his *Life of Mgr. Gerbet*: "We have often heard," says he, "some intimate friends of M. de Lamennais regret that Pope Leo XII. had granted to him on his petition a dispensation from saying the Office" (Book IV.). It was in this case, indeed, *the harp of David necessary to calm the outbreaks of the evil spirit*, and of which P. Lacordaire regretted so sincerely the absence. *Son. Testam.*, p. 69. On a certain occasion one of the popes replied to a cleric who asked for a similar dispensation: *Male dictum studium propter quod relinquitur Officium! Rit. de Toulon.*

and established in order to express as worthily as possible the religious mind of the Church. The spirit breathed by the Breviary is the spirit of Jesus Christ its sovereign Priest. The sentiments which it expresses are those of our Lord communing with His Church. Each Office is an inward picture of Himself: not a dead and inanimate portrait, but a living likeness, in which we see His spirit acting, thinking, and feeling; and wherein His sentiments are traced with the greatest fidelity, inasmuch as it is His own Spirit which has dictated almost every expression. Thus, His regard for the Majesty of His Father—His horror of sin—His love for men—His zeal for heavenly things—His scorn for worldly vanities—His aversion from sensual pleasures—His desire of all virtues, of humility, meekness, penitence, and spirit of sacrifice—all these are painted in turn under the most lively colours and in the most perfect proportions. So that when we recite the Hours of the Office we only express the thoughts of our Saviour—copy His plans and repeat His maxims. In repeating them we adopt them as our own—we utter them as if they were ours, and as if we were one and the same person with Him. Now, this is the secret, the great means of engraving in our minds these dispositions, and of being penetrated with them; in short, of uniting ourselves with Jesus Christ, and of making ourselves one with Him.

If it suffice to frequent the company of Saints to become like them and to participate in their sanctity, must we not acquire our Lord's spirit—must we not be imbued with His sentiments by a union so close, so complete, and so constant as that which is established

between Him and us by the use of the Divine Office? \* For we do not in approaching Him limit ourselves to the exchange of a few words with Him. We try to penetrate into His heart; we contemplate His most hidden desires—we conform ourselves to them, or rather, it is He Himself Who comes to us, and establishes Himself in the very centre of our souls, at the very time when He puts His words on our lips. He communicates His light to our understanding, He warms us with His Love—in such manner that we speak not only the same language as Himself; we produce not only the same acts, but are animated by the same Spirit. † And we can say with truth as does the Apostle—that it is not we who live, but Jesus Christ Who lives in us. ‡ Here we have not only an external resemblance or simple contact; it is a most intimate union founded on the sameness of a divine principle—acting in our Saviour as in our Head, and in each of us as His members from which results an identity of action—that divine strength acting in the same manner in all of us and producing the same effects; and finally there results an identity of position, of habits, and of inclinations in regard to all things.

Thus when the Divine Office is worthily recited, it is a communion at all hours with the spirit and life of our Divine Saviour; or rather it is an admirable complement, as it were, of the Eucharistic Communion. At

\* “Si quis cum spiritualibus viris colloqui solent, brevi sic commutantur ut illorum prudentiam referant, quid dicere convenit de his qui cum Domino colloquia miscent?”—S. Chrys., *Orando Deo*, I. ii.

† “Hæc omnia operatur unus atque idem Spiritus dividens singulis prout vult.”—*Corinth. xii. 11.*

‡ *Galat. ii. 20.*

the altar, it is true, we receive our Lord entirely; we receive Him with all His gifts, and our souls become united to His soul as our bodies become united to His. But we find no particular sign to give us the detail of His sentiments or thoughts—nothing to make us discern His inclinations in order to apply His grace specially to this or that faculty or desire of our souls.\* It is the Divine Office that gives us this advantage. It sheds on us this divine treasure; it spreads out before us all its riches; it forces us to admire and make them our own. Each thought, each affection, every maxim of our Lord becomes our own. By this a new spirit is infused into all our powers to transform and reanimate them. A divine blood, if I may dare say so, circulates in our veins and brings with it a new life. *In venas mentis ac vires animæ succus Verbi descendit æterni.*† Thus is formed the new man—the new creature established according to God in justice and in sanctity.‡ Thus grows in us another being—very superior to us—Jesus Christ the perfect Priest—the One Priest worthy of the Divine Majesty, He becomes all in all. Those who listen to us hear Him, and those who see us recognise in us another Christ: *Sacerdos alter Christus.*

\* “Quis mihi det te fratrem meum sugentem ubera matris meæ, ut sanguis tuus sanguinem meum tangat et tergat; ut fons aquæ tuæ de scaturigine recti cordis, per venas boni operis in finem æternæ felicitatis exiliat?”—*Office Sept. Dolor. B.M.V., Resp. vi.*

† S. Ambr. in *Psalm 1, No. 33.* “Hoc poculum bibe de quo dixit Propheta: *Et poculum tuum inebrians quam præclarum est!*”—*Psalm xxii. 5.* “Utrumque poculum bibe Veteris et Novi Testamenti quia in utroque Christum bibis. Non in solo pane vivit homo sed in omni verbo Dei. Hoc verbum bibe,” etc.  
—S. Ambr., *ibid.*

‡ “In Christi nova creatura.”—*II. Cor. vi. 17.; Galat. vi. 15; Ephes. iv. 24.*

## III.

Such then was the design of the Church in instituting the Divine Office and imposing the observance of it on Her ministers. She did not merely wish to provide for the divine worship and thereby to render to the Lord on earth as in heaven an uninterrupted homage. Nor did She propose only to multiply Her prayers in proportion to Her wants, in order that God might in like manner multiply the graces He bestows upon Her. Before all She sought to provide for our perseverance and sanctification—to penetrate us with the thoughts and sentiments of our Divine Head, and to unite us all together with Him in the same spirit and with one heart. Here then is the fruit which every cleric, who acquits himself of this duty with a lively faith and sincere religious spirit, obtains from the ‘Office’. Of those who strive to recite it in this manner there is not, we may say, one who does not possess the spirit of the priesthood, esteem for holy things—contempt of the world—a love of virtue and the desire for heaven; in a word, who is not already truly a man of God or endeavouring to become one. What is it but this that inspires them with so much respect and zeal for this holy function? What but knowing by experience the help and consolation it offers to their piety, they become the more attached to it the more they have at heart their sanctification, and the more they feel the want of union with God and a desire to be filled with His grace? \*

\* Mgr. Bruté, formerly director of the Seminary of Baltimore and subsequently first Bishop of Vincennes in the United States, *d.* 1846, took note every evening of the chief things he had done or that had happened to him during the



It does not surprise us to read in the Memoirs of the priests sentenced to imprisonment—those acts of the Martyrs added by the French Revolution to the history of the Church—that one of the most cruel amusements of their ferocious gaolers was to rob the condemned clergy of their Breviaries, and so render it impossible for them to say their ‘Office’.<sup>†</sup> To overcome their patience they would have wished to take away from these suffering priests the thought of heaven and the remembrance of God ; at least the gaolers deprived them of what best served to remind them of both. This was one of their most trying afflictions. They therefore guarded as one of their most precious treasures the few copies they had been able to save. When these priests amounted to a certain number in the same cell, they collected in groups near the narrow prison windows to follow the reading of the Breviary which one of them recited aloud. Sometimes, a pitiless turnkey catching sight of this consoling book would snatch it from their hands and scatter its pages to the winds. Then might they have been seen eagerly gathering up these torn leaves and joining the bits together, striving by memory to supply what they could not recover. Such sweetness did they experience in these holy words that had so long served for nourishment to their souls ! So

day. Among other edifying entries the following was found in his Breviary : *At four o'clock said my Breviary. Oh ! the wonders of this Office of the Blessed Sacrament ! . . .* These few words serve to show the heart of the missionary, his esteem for the Divine Office and the joy it afforded him.

<sup>†</sup> *Account of the sufferings and dangers incurred by the priests of the diocese of Tours in 1793*, by M. Leproust. *Abridged recital of the sufferings of nearly eight hundred ecclesiastics . . . in the neighbourhood of Rochefort*, by a Curé of the diocese of Paris. *Account by the Abbé Mangras. Memoir of Mgr. de Beauregard*, t. II, p. 294.



happy were they to be thus able, even in their seclusion, to join with their brethren—to enter with them into the heart of their Divine Master and as S. Cyprian says—pray to God in the very language of God.\*

Heirs of the same priesthood, called to the same ministry—possessing the same treasure, let us congratulate ourselves on our portion, and let us try to show ourselves worthy of it! Let us say with the Psalmist and with the same intention *Bonum est confiteri Domino et psaltere nomini tuo Altissime!*† Let us respect our Divine Office, even in its outer form, in this Breviary which we so often have in our hands.‡ Do not then let

\*In the month of July, 1792, two months before the massacre at the “Carnes,” six priests of Avignon having been condemned to death by the revolutionary tribunal of that town for refusing to take the oath required by the Schismatical Constitution for the clergy, they were conducted to the place of execution to undergo their sentence. The most aged showed the greatest courage. It was M. Brasard, aged 71 years, who had been for some time President of the Seminary of S. Charles. Surrounded by furious men who insulted him and threatened him with their fire-arms—he opened his Breviary (from which he would not be separated) and began to recite it. One of the executioners annoyed by this coolness knocked it out of his hand and derisively cast it on the ground. The worthy priest picked it up and merely said—“Allow me to prepare myself for death : you see I have no one to help me”. He then again began to pray. Whilst preparing to put him to death the executioners amused themselves by making him suffer—striking him with their swords before they gave him the last blow. At last they told him they were going to finish him—“When you please”—answered he, as he presented his head to the block, verifying by his firmness the words of S. Cyprian—*Sacerdos Evangelium Christi tenens, occidi potest, vinci non potest* (*Vie de M. Emery*), t. I, p. 463.

† *Psalm xci. 2.*

‡ This is a sentiment with which the spirit of God inspires all religious souls. “One day”—said Mgr. Dabert, Bishop of Périgueux—“some one had placed a candlestick on the Breviary of M. Vernet. ‘My friend,’ said at once this worthy superior, ‘take off that candlestick. This book is a Breviary—it contains the Word of God—it is not proper to put anything upon it.’”—*Life of M. Vernet, Superior of the Seminary at Viviers* (Book iv.) We read a

us fear to show the respect in which we hold it. I love, I must own, that pious ecclesiastic who had such an affection for his Breviary that night or day he would not be without it. He did for it what Alexander did for the masterpiece of Homer. Sometimes, before he opened it or after he had closed it, he kissed it in a loving manner. Like S. Francis de Sales, he thought there was not a more excellent book after the Gospel. Often he applied to it the words of S. Austin on the Psalter—*Psalterium meum gaudium meum*.\* Or those of the Holy Ghost pronouncing the praise of Wisdom: *Si justitiam quis diligit, prudentiam docet et virtutes. . . . Proposui ergo hanc adducere mihi ad convivendum, sciens quoniam mecum communicabit de bonis, et erit allocutio cogitationis et tædii mei. Non enim habet amaritudinem conversatio ejus, nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiā et gaudium*.†

Nevertheless, Oh my God, what I admire and envy above all things is the happiness of those who until death, preserve the spirit of religion and prayer which Thou bestowest upon them together with this Divine Office, and who, far from raising by their indifference

similar event in *The Life of M. Hurtevent, founder of the Seminary of Lyons*. S. Catherine of Bologna, who died in 1463, had so great an esteem for the Divine Office that she wrote out with her own hand her entire Breviary and ornamented it most carefully. It was not for her a common occupation, nor a simple work of art—it was an exercise of faith and of piety. She only employed herself upon this work on Sundays and Festivals; and she so completely penetrated herself with what she was transcribing, that often tears fell from her eyes, and those around her were obliged to take away from before her the pages she had painted, fearing lest they should be spoilt by her weepings. This Breviary, written entirely by the Saint, and ornamented with coloured pictures of our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, is preserved as a precious relic in her convent.—*Act. Sanct.*, 9 March.—*Life by the Pere Crasset*.

\* *Psalm cxxxvii.* 3.

† *Sap. viii.* 9, et seq.

an obstacle to the fruits which their prayer should produce, bring daily to it a greater fervour and more perfect dispositions. Of all the words of praise that can be written on the tomb of an ecclesiastic, I know of none more desirable than that of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of the Psalmist and which we so often repeat in honour of holy Pontiffs.—*Ecce verus Dei cultor. . . . De omni corde suo laudavit Dominum, et dedit in celebrationibus decus, et dilexit Deum qui fecit illum.*—Eccli. xlvii. 12.\*

\* A pious and learned ecclesiastic of Tours, R. Ouvrard (*d.* 1694), author of the *Defence of the ancient tradition of the French Churches* (1678) desired to have engraved on his tomb these two lines which are the expression of his sentiments and the abridgment of his life—

*Dum vixi divina mihi laus unica cura :*

*Post obitum sit laus divina mihi unica merces ! . . .*

## CHAPTER III.

### ON FAULTS TO BE AVOIDED.

#### I.

IN the recitation of the Divine Office there are two principal dangers to be avoided by the cleric : preoccupation which distracts, and routine which deadens our attention. We will limit ourselves to pointing out this double shoal, and the means we have for guarding ourselves against it.

How can the soul be free to raise herself up to God and to be absorbed in Him if the mind be preoccupied with worldly thoughts, and the heart be agitated by profane sentiments? In vain will she strive to escape from the ideas that besiege her and from the affections that disturb her ; nearly always force of habit will prevail over the desire of the will. Of this every one has had a hundred times to complain. Now prayer requires us to be calm ; and in order to habitually pray well, it is necessary to begin by acquiring a holy habit of self-recollection and interior peace.

The soul of the priest then should resemble the house of God—ever tranquil, silent, and free from profane thoughts—filled only with the Divine Majesty : *Domus orationis*. But alas ! it is with this temple as with that of Jerusalem : instead of being a sanctuary inaccessible to the tumults and disturbances of the world, it becomes

like a place of public resort—open on every side—where even profane objects freely enter, and every world-sound finds an echo.

It would seem as though in the earlier years of one's ministry we could more easily possess our souls in peace. For then our engagements were fewer, we had less intercourse with the world, less responsibility: yet we were so ardent, so restless, so impatient! For lack of external causes the soul finds an inexhaustible source of agitation and care within herself. Now it is some study that absorbs, some project that enchants, or some desire or hope that transports us. Soon too our occupations multiply and more and more absorb our attention. We feel we have good works to perform, and we give ourselves up to them—to such a degree indeed that we lose command of our thoughts and of ourselves. Thenceforth our days become an uninterrupted series of impressions, sentiments, and unreflecting or simply natural performances; and prayer becomes but one among a thousand other distractions. We no longer live but out of ourselves and far from God—*profugus a facie Dei*.\* For a certain time we are uneasy at this disorder, we lament our dissipation of mind—we flatter ourselves we can remedy it; but little by little we become accustomed to it, and end by resigning ourselves to it as a matter of course. Martha ceases to envy Mary; she ends even by regarding as an honour and something needful the part

\* "Olim erat mihi cor cereum quod liquesceret; horrebam audire, quanto magis verbo proferre, quidquid non provocabat ad Christum; omnes nugas verborum sæcularium velut morsus serpentium deputabam. . . . Nunc autem durus et saxeus, dum negotiis jugiter exterioribus atteror, proh dolor! tanquam alter Samson, effossis oculis non frontis sed cordis, curarum sæcularium molam volve."—S. Petr. Dam., *Opusc. xix. de abdic episc. co.*

she has chosen for herself.\* Nothing, says S. Gregory the Great, is commoner than to find priests who, like worldlings, make their happiness and merit consist in a restless activity that tears them away from reflection and from themselves. Constantly hurried, agitated, hesitating, forgetting what they are doing, to think of what they have to do, they seem incapable of fixing their minds on anything.† Those silent intercommunications with God which the Church obliges them to hold seem tame to them in comparison with those which they are accustomed to with creatures; and far from relieving themselves from exterior occupations, as the Apostles did, the better to devote themselves freely to the ministry of prayer, they would readily be quit of that duty in order to have more leisure to devote to the demands of the world and even to the commonest of interruptions.

Such, then, is the first failing to which the holy ministry exposes us: excess in action, hurry and pre-occupation. If we are wanting in watchfulness to preserve ourselves from it, or in courage to resist its progress, it produces another still more dangerous and more tyrannical—namely, habitual negligence or routine.

In fact, whilst absorbed in its preoccupations, the soul accustoms herself to dispense with all restraint. Speaking to God without ceasing to think of the world, she thus familiarises herself with the sacred words. From the habit of pronouncing without reflection the same words

\* "Felix domus, et beata congregatio, ubi de Maria Martha conqueritur."—S. Bernard. *Serm. iii. de Assumpt.*, No. 2.

† S. Greg. M., *de cura past.* l., II., cvii.



—the mind distracted and the heart indifferent—we acquire the unfortunate facility of repeating them mechanically, instinctively and unawares. Nothing can be more sad than this state. For since its effect is to substitute for the free and mature action of the will a blind and fatal principle, it robs the soul of the empire she should hold over her acts, and consequently tends to destroy all the merits of her works. Once under the thralldom of this failing, the will no longer acts—nature replaces it, the mere senses are employed. The prescribed words are always repeated, the usual signs are made, but these are only exterior and almost unconscious movements. The mind and heart have no share in them. We pray as we walk, as we look, as we listen, as we perform the greater part of our ordinary actions, without any notice taken of the act, of its motives and of its object. Scarcely, indeed, do we sometimes reflect that we are addressing God, that we are in His presence, and in immediate relation with Him.\*

There is no practice of piety in which we are not exposed to this fault. Even at the foot of the altar,

\* The following instance, attested by a venerable prelate, shows how fearful are the effects of routine to the priesthood:—"One day the preacher of a pastoral Retreat having spoken with energy against this fault, many ecclesiastics recognised themselves in the portraits which he had drawn, and many admitted that they had passed whole days without having made real acts of faith, hope, and charity. But what was most striking was the almost public avowal which one of them made that for months and years he had lived without interior return to God. Vainly did they urge that such a thing was incredible; for that having fulfilled his functions with a certain degree of exactitude, it was impossible but that sometimes at least he must have experienced some good thought and pious emotion. But he continued to declare that such had been his condition; and upon such certain testimony, we must admit that he had grievously failed in the first precept of the decalogue and had lived in sin."—Devie, *Memorial du Clergé*.



and during the most solemn functions—in administering the Sacraments, in the celebration of the Divine Mysteries, we too often feel its influence ; but in no case have we so much reason to fear it and have less help to guard against it as when reciting the Divine Office. Let us reflect for a moment. It is not a question of performing a mere passing religious act, lasting for a longer or shorter time ; it is concerning an exercise of every day, of every moment of the day—an exercise more or less monotonous, which reduces itself externally to reading and pronouncing with the lips certain forms of words which, with very little variety, always return at the same hours and in the same order. It is not at the altar that this function is performed or at the time when the attention is fixed by the religious ceremonies, by the number of the assistants, and by the presence of the laity ; rather it is ordinarily at times and in places least favourable to prayer ; it is, for example, just after some long conversation, or laborious study, or a dissipating recreation, in the presence of a work just begun and with agreeable distractions before us ; or it may be that it is when we are alone, and have no other witness but God, and when the spirit of decorum does not help towards religious fervour, that we engage in this work.\* Oh ! what faith must we have—what a spirit of prayer—what fidelity to grace, to preserve without ceasing an attention which everything tends to dull ; and to avoid yielding to that pleasant and at the same time powerful current of carelessness and routine.

But what more often happens, and in what manner,

\* “ *Privatam et solitariam psalmodiam accédia oppugnat.*”—S. Joan. Clim. *Grad. xxviii.*

in too many instances, is the great ministry of public prayer discharged? It is God alone Who sees our hearts, and He alone can say with certainty how many fervent and zealous adorers He reckons among His clergy.\* But, if we may judge by appearances, and of the interior state by the exterior bearing, have we not reason to fear that He receives but the homage of the lips rather than of the heart; and that the multitude of those occupied on earth in celebrating His name, offer to the Divine Eye a spectacle very different to that of the Blessed who are absorbed in the same adoration and inflamed with the same love?†

A certain historian relates that one night as the priests of a celebrated collegiate church met together to sing matins, and had finished the last Nocturn of the morrow's feast, a voice from heaven was heard in the church, distinctly pronouncing the following words, which struck terror to the hearts of all present—" *There is but one man alone among you who has truly glorified Me*".‡ Yet these priests do not appear to have been regarded as less orderly or less fervent than many others. What should we find if it pleased God to make known each day to us priests how worthily we had acquitted ourselves of our duty as regards the Divine Office? Should we not be surprised and at the same time alarmed to discover how small is the number of faithful ministers, and how great that of the clergy who only fulfil exter-

\* "Qui scrutatur corda Deus scit quid desideret Spiritus."—*Rom. viii.*

† "Quam multi sonant voce et corde muti sunt."—S. Aug. in *Joan. tract. xxv. et in Ps. cxix.* "Multi in novitate suæ conversionis ferventer orant, postea languide, postea frigide, postea negligenter."—S. Aug. in *Ps. lxxv.*

‡ Thom. Catemp., *Miraculorum mirabilium*, lib. II., C. xl., No. 10.

nally and without devotion so important and so sublime a service?

## II.

Even were laxity as rare as unfortunately it may be common in this matter, it is sufficient that it is possible, to make it necessary that we should point it out, so that each one may watch over himself and not give way in so serious a fault, for nothing can be more hurtful to our spiritual interests, or to the glory of God and the good of the Church.

I will not here examine in what cases dissipated and negligent habits would lead to a grave violation of the ecclesiastical law which makes the recital of the Divine Office a strict duty and a debt of justice to be paid by its sacred ministers. I leave this question to the decision of theologians. But even if we have not to fear this peril, and were sure to accomplish the essential obligation in reciting the words, is it not at least certain that negligence must in this matter be most hurtful to him who is guilty of it? It would certainly deprive him of a sweet consolation. The Breviary is, as we have said, the joy of the priest.\* It is his refreshment after his fatigues, his consolation in his weariness. *Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua* (Ps. cxviii. 103). *Exulta-*

\* "O quantis nobis aliisque profectibus essent  
Verba precum sapide si recitata forent !  
Essent scripta Dei, psalmi solatia nostra  
Inque fide edoctis quam pia sensa darent !  
Actibus in lectis heroum chisticolarum  
Dum peteremus idem cor sequeremur eos  
Sanctorumque Patrum sermones instruerent nos  
Immemores horum repere nonne pudet ?"

—Sartelon.

*bant labia mea cum cantavero tibi* (Ps. lxx. 23 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6).

But how can we taste this sweetness, how unite ourselves to God and value His word, if we bring to the recital of the Divine Office a cold and indifferent heart? In vain shall the lips pronounce these beautiful passages if the thoughts are away, and if the sentiments fail to touch us. "It is the spirit that quickeneth" (2 Cor. iii. 6). It is the marrow and not the outer part that nourishes the soul. Far then from rejoicing us or strengthening us, prayer merely of the lips and without devotion becomes irksome and fatiguing. We feel it to be but a dry exercise and ungracious task, a labour without reason and without fruit.—*Cogitationes meæ dissipatæ sunt, torquentes cor meum. Ubi est nunc præstolatio mea?* (Job xvii. 15). With the consolation which prayer affords, the careless priest infallibly loses the greatest part of his merits.\* The office well said has certainly great influence with God. It is composed of acts of Faith, of Gratitude, of Love, and of Compunction—of praise most perfect and most meritorious. A holy priest, when on his deathbed and exhorted to have trust in God, asked for his Breviary to be put into his hands, adding—"This it is that encourages me the most. After having blessed and prayed to God so long on earth, may I not hope to be admitted to pray to and bless Him for ever in heaven?" He was right to speak thus, for he was a man of faith, of charity, and of contemplation. He was

\* "Misceri non possunt vera vanis, æterna caducis, spiritualia corporalibus, summa imis ; ut pariter sapias quæ sursum sunt et quæ super terram. . . . Hinc ista sterilitas animæ et devotionis inopia. Non sapit psalmus, non legere libet, non orare delectat. Ideo ad opus piger ad vigilias somnolentus." —S. Bern. *Serm. liv. in Cant.*

not content with reciting in a literal and servile manner the sacred words of the Breviary, but *meditated* on them during the day as did the Psalmist.\* He *entertained himself with the thought of them* according to the advice of S. Paul, *and he had sung them continually from the depths of his heart.*† But could he have had this confidence had he been a negligent and careless priest? Would his prayer, if he prayed only with his lips, have lasted more than half a century? And of what avail would his Office have been at the tribunal of God. *Quid prodest psalmus nisi devotio comitetur? Psallere sine devotione est quasi os sonans et cymbalum tinniens.*‡

Alas! there are many in the Sacred Ministry to whom at the hour of death God will say: Thou hast lost the merit of all thy prayers; § many for whom it would have been better had they never exercised the duties of their state than to have devoted to them only the first years of their priesthood. “*To have to recite the Breviary!*” said P. Eudes to the members of his society, “*what a reckoning at the Last Day! I have little doubt but that many will be long detained in Purgatory for their lukewarmness in the performance of this duty.*”||

\* “*Exultabunt labia mea, sed et lingua mea tota die meditabitur justitiam tuam.*”—*Ps. lxx. 26.*

† “*Os justi meditabitur sapientiam.*”—*Ps. xxxvi. 20.*

‡ *Ephes. v. 9.* A pious ecclesiastic of the 17th century, Ant. Roussier, had a great devotion to the sacred office. He neglected no opportunity of inspiring esteem and love for the Breviary. A few moments before his death, praying aloud for the clergy, he said—“*Lord, grant to all Thy servants grace to say the office well.*”—P. Hanart, *Recueil de vies de bons prêtres*, in 4°; 1665.

§ S. Hier. *Can. Non mediocr. 23 De Consec. dist. 5.*

|| “*Seminastis multum et intulistis parum; comedistis et non estis saturati.*”—*Agg. i. 6.*

|| *Life of P. J. Eudes*, by P. Montigny, I., x.

Thus, to recite the Office negligently and without attention and fervour, is not only to change a consoling and meritorious practice into a repulsive and dry work, but to render us guilty before God of abusing one of His most precious graces.\* Happy the priest whose conscience does not reproach him on this score, who accustoms himself to meditate upon the words he utters, and who nourishes his soul with the praises of the Lord! As a tree planted by the banks of a stream and filled with vigorous sap, he shall yield fruit abundantly in due season. But woe to him who cannot in his thoughts glorify his Divine Master! whose heart ignores or disavows the words which he addresses to Him—who recites his prayer desiring nothing, feeling nothing, asking nothing! In vain his lips move and tire with their movements. For him prayer instead of being a source of grace becomes a cause of condemnation. *Labor labiorum ipsorum operiet eos* (Ps. cxxxix. 10).† Instead of drawing down upon themselves the favour of their Heavenly Master, their seeming piety will bring upon them the severest chastisements. *Simulantes longam orationem hi accipient damnationem majorem.*‡ Bad enough would it be if such persons only compromised themselves, but their negligence injures the Church, and as a consequence the glory of God.

\* “Quæ segnitia est alienari et capi ineptis cogitationibus et profanis, cum Dominum precaris, quasi sit aliud quod debeas magis cogitare quam quod cum Deo loqueris? Hoc est quando oras Dominum, majestatem Dei negligentiam orationis offendere.”—S. Cyp., *de Orat. Dom.*

† In the Breviary of the learned Horstius, curé of Cologne (*d.* 1644), was found this maxim written by his own hand—*Si cor non orat in vanum lingua laborat.*

‡ *Luc. xx. 47. See Act. Sanct., 16 June. Life of S. Lutgarde, I., III., No. 11.*



Societies have, as we have said, no less than individuals, duties to fulfil towards the Divine Majesty. As for the former so for the latter the blessings of heaven depend upon the fidelity with which they discharge their obligations. Let them but render to God all the worship they owe Him, and He will assuredly grant them all the grace they require. If they are pious and fervent in His service, God will be generous and munificent in His liberality. *Quicumque honorificaveret me glorificabo eum.\**

There exists then between God and the Church a sort of reciprocal engagement which obliges one to ask and return thanks without ceasing, and the Other to grant favours without measure. But, at the same time, there is between the Church and Her sacred ministers another contract in virtue of which they are bound to pray to God for their brethren, and render to Him in the name of all a tribute of praise and supplication.† This engagement or contract binds the Priesthood to the Christian people in the strictest manner; and, even in regard to pastors, it takes the character of most rigorous justice, since as they do not assume of themselves the possession of their dignity, so they cannot reap its advantages but on the condition that they fulfil the obligations attached to it.‡ Admirable example of

\* *I. Reg. ii. 31.*

† “Presbyteri officium in orando Deum pro totius ecclesiæ prosperitate situm est; ideoque proventus et beneficia sacerdotibus conferuntur ut ipsi pro populo precibus ac votis insistere, ejusque debeant peccata portare.”—S. Petr. Dam., *Epist. xix., lib. iv.*

‡ C. *Presbyter mane*, dist 91. C. *Si quis sacerdotium*; et C. *Eos etiam*, dist 81. “Omnibus dictum est. *Petite et accipietis*, his vero ut semper petant nec pro semetipsis tantum sed et pro tota ecclesia Dei ut vincat populus, qui sub ipsis est, hostes illos invisibiles; ut stent sicut Moyses levatis semper interioribus



a pious and touching union! Obligated to watch over the material cares of this life, the greater part of Christians cannot of themselves satisfy the precept of prayer, so the Church, their common Mother, chooses among them those She judges the most worthy of this ministry, and consecrates them body and soul to the worship of the Lord; She arranges that for the future they shall have to praise God and invoke Him in favour of the people, and at the same time She declares that the people by providing for the subsistence of their Pastors, should have a share in their merit, and be thus discharged of their own debt towards God. By this means all interests are conciliated, all wants are satisfied, all good becomes common to both, and each Christian renders that incessant homage to the Lord which His Omnipotence claims from us. *Commune jus omnium; Ecclesia in commune orat in commune operatur.\**

But what are we to conclude from this with regard to the sacred ministers? It is that for them there is no stricter obligation than the Divine Office, and that they cannot take too much care to acquit themselves worthily of it. It is of Faith that no one of himself can gain any merit,—that grace is as necessary for the perseverance of the just as for the conversion of sinners; and that at

animi manibus in cælum in confractione, in conspectu Dei, ad avertendam iram ejus ne disperdat populum suum assidue precantem.”—*Concil. Colon.*, p. 11, c. iv., 1536.

\* S. Ambr., *de Off. I., I., cxxix., No. 14.*—“Sicut in uno corpore multa membra habemus, omnia autem membra non eundem actum habent, ita multi unum corpus sumus in Christo, singuli autem alter alterius membra habentes autem donationes secundum gratiam quæ data est nobis differentes.”—*Rom. xii. 4, 5.* “Ut non sit schisma in corpore sed pro invicem sollicita sint membra.”—*I. Cor. xii. 25.*

each moment a multitude of souls are suspended as it were between heaven and hell, so that their lot depends more or less upon the help they receive from heaven. It is also certain that prayer is the ordinary means for obtaining the gifts of God, and that public prayer, and in particular that of the Church, exerts a direct and considerable influence with regard to the graces given to each of Her members. To acquit ourselves, then, carelessly, and without attention and piety, is to put an obstacle in the way of grace ; it is to reduce its measure, and to diminish, as far as in us lies, the chances of the salvation or sanctification of a number of the faithful. Can we then face without terror so grave a responsibility? How much ought we to reproach ourselves for the loss of those we could have saved ! Would Moses have been guiltless of the defeat of his people if he had neglected to lift up his hands in their favour, or had suffered them to fall before the battle was won? Or, is it only when it is a question of this temporal life, and of the goods of this world, that we ought to bear in mind the undoubted maxim of the doctors of the Church—“*Si non pavisti, occidisti*”? Surely it is homicide not to save one whom we could save from death. Oh ! if we but reflected upon these truths—if we would become penetrated with them, how soon would our conduct and our language be changed.

It is rare to be present at a meeting of the clergy without hearing them bitterly deplore the afflictions of the Church. Everyone laments the progress of liberalism and of unbelief. They are afflicted at the coldness of piety : they speak of the scandals they witness, and cry out with the Prophet—Virtue is no longer on

earth, and we despair of bringing her back.\* Almost always a pastor thinks he ought to complain of some portion of his flock. The children are indocile—the young people disorderly—the middle-aged take no heed of their salvation and are indifferent. In vain does he toil to preserve innocence and to reclaim sinners. His sermons are not listened to, or are only received with indifference. The Holy Table is neglected. The Sacrifice of the Altar is offered up in solitude, without worshippers. People seem to be doing a favour to God in consenting to receive pardon for their sins. . . . These evils assuredly are but too real; but whilst lamenting them, do we ask ourselves if we have done all we ought to stop their progress. Do we not forget that prayer is the most powerful weapon against the enemies of our salvation,† and that the Divine Office especially is the shield of the strong?‡—that our Saviour and His Apostles did more by prayer than by their labours for the conversion of souls?—lastly, that it is the Lord only Who can change the hearts of men, give efficacy to our ministry, and maintain the edifice which He has founded? *Ego Dominus qui dico Jerusalem: Ædificaberis: et templo: Fundaberis.*

It is not our intention to assert that every vice of the people is to be imputed to the clergy, and that they alone will be responsible for the faults of the faithful. Nor do we pretend to say that a well-said

\* “Væ mihi! Perijt sanctus de terra et rectus in hominibus non est.”—*Mich. vii. 9.* “Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata: derelinquamus eam.”—*Jerem. li. 9.*

† “Agendum voto et precibus, si corrigi objurgationibus non potest.”—*S. Aug., Contr. Parm. I., III., c. i.*

‡ *II. Reg. i. 21.*

prayer is sufficient to change a whole parish ; but we do say that every pastor ought to pray heart and soul for the good of his flock,—that if he prays well, his prayers will not prove fruitless, and that, ordinarily speaking, he will not have long to wait before they bear an abundant harvest.\*

Elias was a man like ourselves—weak as we are ; but by his prayer he opened heaven and shut up its gates at his will, according as the Divine interests inspired him to act (Jacob. v. 17). How is it then that with the same means we can no longer produce the same results ? Why do we fruitlessly implore favours still more necessary and conformable to the ordinary designs of Providence ? *Rogante pro eis Sacerdote*, says the Holy Ghost, *propitius erit eis Dominus*.† Oh ! how many pastors are there who, assuming that they have done all for the safety of their flock, will one day perceive they have neglected the most essential and most effectual means of conversion ! How many who store up for themselves most painful deceptions against the future. To-day it is they who complain of the souls committed to their care ; they accuse them of hard-heartedness, of indolence and of insensibility : but later on when these same souls enlightened by a divine ray

\* “Quemadmodum cum videris arborem pallentibus foliis, intelligis quia aliquam culpam habet circa radicem, ita cum videris populum indisciplinatum et irreligiosum, cognosce quia in sacerdotibus culpa est. Sicut de templo omne bonum egreditur, sic et de templo omne malum procedit.”—S. Chrys., *de Preca-tione*. “Credite nobis, fratres, omnium quæ nos exercent malorum, totius istius quam non obstantibus laboribus et studiis nostris, ager dominicus exhibet, sterelitatis causa in eo præcipue cubat, quod laus Domini multum attenuata est in populis sed in primis ore sacerdotum. Non satis curant sacerdotes ligna mane subicere altari.”—Card Ep. Zagrabiensis, *Epist. past.*, 1857.

† *Levit. iv. 20.*

shall behold in the past the sins in which they lived, the enemies that fought against them, and the dangers into which they had fallen, will they not ask themselves what had those done for their salvation who had been given to them as guides and guardians to that end? And when they shall come to see that notwithstanding so many apparent efforts and so much pretended zeal these hireling pastors have been so indifferent to their salvation as to have uttered but with their lips, and as it were, unwillingly, those prayers on the efficacy of which their lot may be said to have depended; with what reproaches will they not overwhelm them? with what indignation will they not denounce as injustice and treason this negligence before the tribunal of God?

To the wails of souls thus sadly deserted, add the indignation of the God Whose Glory has been thus abased and Whose Name has been thus despised.

It is grand and glorious that the Sovereign Master should everywhere here below possess ministers to praise His perfections as the blessed do in heaven, but it is so on condition that these praises are sincere and proceed from the heart.\* Otherwise what honour would it be to Him? If the words we address to Him are but a vain sound—a mere exercise of the lips—how can He take pleasure therein? Men content themselves with the exterior because appearances deceive them, and because they are unable to see within; but God, Who penetrates the heart, considers the intention.† He

\* “*Holocausta medullata offeram tibi.*”—*Psal. lxx. 15.* “*Quid est medullata. Intus teneam caritatem tuam: non erit in superficie, in medullis meis erit quod diligo te.*”—*S. Aug., in hunc loc.*

† “*Dominus posuit oculum super corda.*”—*Eccli. xvii. 7.* “*Qui autem scrutatur corda Deus scit quid desideret spiritus.*”—*Rom. viii. 7.*



requires from us the tribute of our affections and of our thoughts,\* and He rejects as mockery and unworthy of Him every worship that has not its principle and its reality in the depth of our heart. *Hypocritæ bene prophetavit de vobis Isaias dicens: Populus hic labiis me honorat; cor autem eorum longe est a me.*†

Nothing was more terrible than the reproaches addressed by one of the last of the Prophets to the ministers of the ancient worship of God. Although full of instruction for us, we almost hesitate to recall it to you. "Listen to my words," said he to them, "blind and faithless priests; it is to you they are addressed: *Ad vos, O sacerdotes, qui despicitis Nomen Meum et dixistis: In quo despeximus?* I made a covenant with your father Levi: I gave him life and every good that he could desire: and he on his part honoured and respected Me. *Pactum Meum cum Levi, vitæ et pacis; et dedi ei timorem et timuit Me.* He was faithful to his word: I was true to Mine: he enjoyed all the blessings that I had promised to him. *Lex veritatis fuit in ore ejus: in pace et in æquitate ambulavit mecum, et multos avertit ab iniquitate.* But now you will no longer walk in this way; you trample under foot this covenant. Instead

\* "Fide plurimam hostiam Abel quam Cain obtulet Deo."—*Hebr. xi. 4.*  
 "Non Abel ex operibus, sed ex fide Abel munera oblata placuerunt."—*S. Greg., Magn. Moral. I., XXII., c. xxi.*

† *Isaiæ xix. 13; Matth. xv. 8.* "Longe est: Inde discere possumus quomodo aliquis appropinquet Deo."—*S. Hier in hoc verb.*

"It is to mock God," said S. Vincent Ferrier, "it is to make a derisive offering to Him when we limit ourselves to the mere recital of the letter of the Office. *Quando cor non reputat quæ dicuntur ore fit encœnium Deo de ovis vacuis et reputat se delusum!*"—"My brethren," said a fervent religious to some ecclesiastics who seemed somewhat lax, "*we shall not discharge our debt to God unless we pay Him in good coin.*"—*Life of F. Gaspard de Bono.*

of edifying your brethren by teaching them to venerate My Sovereign Majesty, you scandalize them by your profanations and irreverence. Prepare then to undergo the decrees of My Justice. Woe to them who know My Greatness and who do not honour Me according to it! Woe to him who having vowed a precious offering to Me substitutes for it a worthless victim! *Maledictus dolosus qui votum faciens, immolat debile Domino* (Malach. i. 6). I have promised to glorify in heaven those who shall have glorified Me on earth; but whosoever shall have despised Me, him will I deliver up to scorn even in this life. Hear, then, O Priests, once more this final warning. *Et nunc, ad vos, O Sacerdotes!* If you hasten not to re-enter into yourselves and give to My Name the honour which you owe to it, My love for you shall change into hatred; I will answer with curses your insulting blessings: your incense I will turn from as from some poisonous stench. *Si nolueritis ponere super cor ut detis gloriam Nomini Meo, maledicam benedictionibus vestris et disperdam super vultum vestrum stercus solemnitatatum vestrarum.* . . . Ah! see you not that already this judgment takes effect, and that you yourselves are the first to experience that scorn which you excite against Me? *Propter quod et Ego dedi vos contemptibiles omnibus populis* (Malach. ii. 9). *Qui contemnunt me erunt ignobiles*" (1 Reg. ii. 30).\*

\* See Note II. at the end of the volume—*On Distractions.*



## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE DISPOSITIONS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY NECESSARY IN ORDER TO PRAY WELL.

As there are faults to be avoided in reciting the Divine Office, so also there are certain dispositions of mind necessary in order to say it well.

Many persons look upon this matter as a very easy one. To watch over oneself, to avoid distractions, to observe certain practices in order to overcome routine, to animate oneself with good intentions—this, according to some, is all that is required in order to discharge perfectly this duty. Nothing can be more mistaken than such an idea—nothing so insufficient as the above conditions. Doubtless the will is a powerful agent, and it must be a great gain to begin any exercise with the resolution to do it well ; but if the exercise, whatever it may be, should prove to be one opposed to our habits or to the natural inclination of our minds, the resolution will not last long, nor will it produce great results. It is not in our power to suddenly stop the course of our ideas—to change, all of a sudden, the tendency of our affections—to animate ourselves with such and such sentiments. Indeed, were such a mental condition possible, we could not promise ourselves that we could renew it at pleasure or prolong it for any length of time.

What requires a great effort to do, does not last long, says the Proverb—*Violentum non durat*.

As to the different practices and methods, we must admit they are not very efficacious in themselves: they do not prevent the wanderings of the mind, nor the dryness of the heart; and that far from ministering to the inward spirit, they need it and presuppose its existence. The spirit of prayer cannot be communicated, nor can it come from without; it is a spontaneous product of the soul. *Like to the daughter of the king, she derives all her dignity and worth from within.\**

In order, therefore, to perform well this duty of Public Prayer, a priest should have certain interior qualities—certain habitual dispositions—a special supernatural state of mind. *Sicut sine spiritu fidei non est quisquam recte crediturus, ita sine spiritu orationis non est quisquam salubriter oraturus*, says S. Augustine. Thus, this spirit, which the Scripture itself calls the spirit of prayer, supposes a high degree of Christian virtue, and demands for its support the exercises of a pious and sacerdotal life. *Fides, spes, caritas ad Deum perducunt orantem*, says the same Doctor. *Ora in spe, ora fideliter et amanter. Tanto quippe sumemus capacius, quanto et fidelius credimus, et speramus firmitus, et desideramus ardentius.†*

## I.

In the first place it supposes a great Faith, a lively and deep Faith in the principal articles of our religion—in God and His greatness—in Jesus Christ and His

\* Psalm *xliv.* 14. De Maistre, *Soirees*.

† *Epist. cxxi.*, ad Prob. *De orando Deo. cviii.* 13; *ix.* 2.—Cf. *Serm. xxvii.*; *Enchir. iii.*

mysteries—in salvation and in its necessity : *Credere enim oportet accedentem ad Deum*. It is by Faith that the just man lives, according to S. Paul.\* Above all, Faith forms his prayer—inspires, animates, and quickens it.

What, in fact, is prayer, considered in itself and in its intimate essence? It is the cry of the heart—it is the flight of the soul to God ; it is the religious testimony of our wonder, of our trust, and of our love ; it is the sincere and humble expression of our wants and of our regrets, of our hopes and fears, of our longings and our supplications. Where the soul slumbers, and the heart remains insensible, there can be no true prayer. *Vera postulatio non in oris est vocibus*, says a holy Doctor, *sed in cogitationibus cordis*.† But, what is it that excites in us these sentiments, *these thoughts of the heart*? What but Faith, with its sublime teachings, with its penetrating lights and ardent convictions, can thus touch us and carry us onwards towards God? Truly to love the Lord, to admire, to invoke Him, it is necessary to know Him well, to have Him ever before our eyes, and to be penetrated with His Divine Perfections.

How comes it, then, that so many pray badly or not at all? For these three reasons : they either reject the truths of Christianity, or they forget them, or they neglect, for want of a serious and profound meditation, to become penetrated with them. Reduced to the possession of merely natural knowledge, those whom the light of revelation does not illumine, have necessarily but most vague and incomplete ideas concerning the

\* *Heb x. 38*, et seq.

† S. Greg. Magn., *Moral. xxi., c. xviii.*

Divine Perfections. They scarcely know anything of God but His Existence and His Incomprehensibility. But this does not suffice to touch the heart and excite the affections.\* The same thing may be said of those Christians who content themselves with believing the truths of Faith without ever making them the object of their reflections. They act, judge, and live as if they believed not. The heavenly light exists in their soul, but it is hidden there as under a bushel; it produces little impression upon their heart and mind. Quick and full of ardour for the things of sense, for supernatural things they are as men dull and wandering in mind. They see without discerning, they hear without understanding, they know without being conscious of what they know and without drawing any profit from it. God, Heaven, Hell, Redemption, the Church are known to them, but their knowledge of these truths is but a simple remembrance that haunts their memory without enlightening their minds or touching their hearts. What is put before them is not so much the object as the image—an image cold and colourless, a pale reflection, a sort of shadow like that which one perceives at the approach of night or on a foggy day in winter. Obscurity that dims the objects before us only leaves to them a doubtful appearance which imagination can transform at pleasure. *Video homines velut arbores*, said the blind man at Bethsaida at the moment when his eyes began to open.† How can such vague notions

\* “Fides est oculus cordis. Videt qui credit. Ideo rationabiliter dictum est per Isaiam : *Nisi credideritis non intelligetis*.”—S. Aug., *Ep. cxx.*, § 3; *Isaiæ vii. 9, juxta Sept.* “Credo ut intelligam.”—S. Anselm, *Cur Deus homo?*

† *Marc. viii. 24.* I have known one of the greatest doctors in the world—even a monk, who did not know how, at the hour of death, to make an act of

suffice to excite and keep alive the spirit of prayer? They may, in favourable circumstances, produce a good desire and raise the heart to God; but this will only prove to be a momentary burst of feeling: the spirit of prayer like a ray of the sun passing through a cloud will soon vanish, and, with the ordinary obscurity of the mind, the insensibility and dulness of the soul will return.

What, then, is that Faith which is necessary to enable us to pray with constancy and with fervour? It is a Faith, lively, active, and energetic, that does not sleep—that does not allow itself to become dull or vegetate in the mind, but acts with freedom and reigns supreme within us. We can scarcely imagine the influence such a faith exerts or the change which it works in the mind and heart. When this divine light dispels the darkness and no cloud dims the purity of its splendour, a new day floods and rejoices all the powers of the soul. We feel as though we had come out of the shadows of night into the full brightness of mid-day. A number of objects we had not even guessed at now develop themselves and seem to spring up before us; many others of which we had not perceived the grandeur or meaning now reveal themselves in all their true proportions. It is like a new world emerging from obscurity and revealing itself to us. The horizon enlarges—the clouds pass away—the divine side of things become visible.\* Now all religious objects

faith, because in life he had exerted himself too much for science and too little for religion. So little esteem did he appear to have had for it, that God willed to show him and his companions that science is but of little worth when time is about to end.—Olier, *Opinions nouvelles*.

\* “Quoniam Deus qui de tenebris dixit lucem splendescere ipse illuxit in cordibus nostris.”—II. Cor. iv. 6.

strike, hold, and transport us : words which had spoken nothing to the heart, now transfigured as it were by the images they evoke, become darts of fire. God is no longer a distant and far-off Being, scarcely known, scarcely reached, amid the clouds of His grandeur. He is now present to our sight ; we behold Him and feel Him within ourselves a thousand times greater than we had figured Him in heaven : *Deus e vicino, et non de longe*.<sup>\*</sup> Now the Divine Action no longer seems, as formerly, restricted to the great movements of the universe. We see it exercise itself everywhere, directing and ruling all things ; a thousand times more sensibly felt and more admirable in ordinary occurrences than formerly we regarded it in the great events of the world.<sup>†</sup> Creation now ceases to be a mere collection of objects remarkable alike for their variety and harmony : it has become a living and convincing manifestation of the infinite Being Who is its author.<sup>‡</sup> Heaven and Hell are no longer vague words conveying the idea of a distant and but little known alternative—it is the infinity of bliss or misery that now shows itself to the soul as its lot for ever. In fine, Jesus Christ no longer simply appears what He seemed to the senses and incredulous reason—a marvellous Personage without His equal amongst men, and possessing an immense influence in the history of peoples. He is now the great Reality of the world—the Principle, the Centre, the End

\* "Putasne Deus e vicino ego sum, et non de longe?"—*Jerem. xxiii. 23.*  
 "Ecce omnes gentes quasi stilla situlæ et quasi momentum stateræ reputatæ sunt."—*Isaiæ xl. 15.*

† "Numquid erit malum in civitate, quod Dominus non fuerit?"—*Amos. iii. 6.*

‡ "O Israel, quam magna est domus Domini et ingens locus possessionis ejus!"—*Baruch. iii. 24.*



of all things—the Foundation on which all reposes—the Pivot around which everything arranges itself (Coloss. i. 17). It is God Himself become man without ceasing to be God—abasing all by His Greatness, ruling all by His Power, absorbing all in His Immensity, reducing all to silence by His orders, ready to rule by His judgment, from which there is no appeal, every creature for all eternity.

Thus for a docile soul Faith changes her view of things, and showing them to her from a heavenly aspect, they shine as a new world to her interior contemplation. *Est argumentum non apparentium* (Hebr. xi. 1). By a necessary consequence it opens up in the heart a new source of sentiments and affections\*—supernatural affections, divine sentiments, which rising up towards their principle form a continuous hymn to the glory of the Most High, and an incessant petition in favour of our Poverty.† Now, prayer does not require to be commanded, dictated, formulated; it rises spontaneously from the innermost soul.‡ She only asks to pour out her feelings, and when able to express them it is to her a source of joy to be, as it were, clothed and animated by them. Then, instructed by the Psalmist and enlightened by the same spirit, she cries out: I will praise the Lord all the days of my life. “I will praise Thy name in the assembly of saints—my heart and my soul spring forth towards the Living God.” §

Then she addresses herself to all created things, and

\* “*Credientes exultabitis lætitia inenarrabili et glorificata.*”—*I. Peter i. 8.*

† “*Tunc repletum est gaudio os nostrum et lingua nostra exultatione.*”—*Ps. cxxv. 2.*

‡ “*Credidi, propter quod locutus sum.*”—*Ps. cxv. 10.*

§ *Ps. cxlv., xxxiv., lxxxiii.*

seeing them full of the gifts of God, she invites them to sing with her the praises of her Maker—"Let us sing together the glory of the most High. Ye works of the Lord, praise the Lord with me" (Ps. xcix. and cxc., xiv).

Beholding on one side the judgments of God deep as the abyss, and His decrees crushing as mountains, and on the other, considering this world as a sea studded with rocks and disturbed by storms, she then redoubles her cries of distress, and pierces the very heavens with her earnest prayer.\* "Draw me out of the abyss, O Lord, and preserve me from shipwreck. The waves of the sea are beating against me. Thou art my sole refuge, O God! Thou Source of my life, and Protector of my days." †

## II.

If Faith produces in us all the necessities for prayer it is not because Hope and Charity are strangers to it; for as these virtues act upon the soul in proportion as we seize their reason and intention, so are they developed by Faith. The devils believe, and yet they do not pray—for they have neither Hope nor Charity. Knowing God without the hope of enjoying Him, they can only tremble and fear Him. *Credunt et contremiscunt.* ‡ But for us who are called to possess God, who already enjoy His Love, and who hope soon to participate in His Glory and Power and Bliss, everything that makes us know and admire Him, makes us, at the same time,

\* "Fides fundit orationem; fusa oratio etiam ipsi fidei impetrat firmitatem."  
—S. August., *Serm. cxv. De verb. Evang.*

† *Ps. lxxviii., xli., &c.*

‡ *Jac. ii. 19.* "Pia fides sine spe et caritate esse non vult."—S. Aug., *Ep. cxx. ad Consent.* "Quia credidisti sperasti, quia sperasti dilexisti."—*In Psalm cxiv. 2.*

desire and love Him. He draws towards Himself the thoughts of our minds and the aspirations of our hearts. It is Hope which is the principal source of our petitions, of our invocations, and properly speaking, of our prayers. A soul ruled by this virtue is in a continual state of supplication before the throne of God ; and can now explain the ardour of her desires. The Lord is her Strength, her Resource, her Refuge, her Joy, her All.\* She can say each morning that He is the first object of her thoughts—that she sighs for Him as the hart pants after the water-brooks (Ps. xli. 2). She listens with eagerness to everything that speaks to her of heaven ; and all the magnificence or grandeur she sees on this earth is in her eyes only a foretaste of the happy lot she looks for hereafter. She longs with the prophet for the delights of his country ; and under the veil of holy images she ceases not to behold the reality of the future.† Jerusalem, land of the living ! Glorious and everlasting City ! Mountain of Sion ! Sacred Tabernacle ! House of God ! Vision of Peace ! These words are not for her empty sounds of no worth—or cold ruins buried in the dust of the past. You speak to her heart as the dearest objects of her Father's home—you recall to her touching and dear remembrances.‡

\* "Dominus virtus mea, fortitudo mea, refugium meum," &c.—*Ps. cxxxix. 8; xvii. 2, 3; xxxi. 7, &c.*

† In the *Esprit de S. Franc. de Sales*, p. 11, § 3, and in the *Life of S. Vincent de Paul*, by Abelly, p. 1, may be seen what impression was produced in the minds of these two saints by the ardent desires of the Psalmist.—"Heu mihi quia incolatus meus prolongatus est!"—*Ps. cxix. 5*, et, "Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus".—*Ps. cxxxvi. 1.*

‡ Here is an example which we have taken from the life of a holy monk of the 17th century—Michael de Sanctis, 1591–1625—recently canonized. One night, the eve of S. Martin, he had sung in the choir the 8th lesson of Matins,

Angels of heaven, holy Apostles, glorious Martyrs, worthy Bishops, Confessors, Virgins, of all ranks, and of all ages, whose memory we celebrate and whose protection we seek, ye are not to her eyes as strangers, she sees in you advocates, models, fellow-citizens in the future, in whose society she hopes to live and praise God during endless ages ! Thus her whole life here is but a longing for heaven, and the more ardent this desire the more inflamed and multiplied become her prayers.\*

But unhappily, there are too many souls whose Hope is as feeble as their Faith : who without renouncing their hope of heaven—without ceasing to aspire to it, hardly ever think of it—and even seem to dread the moment that may give them an entrance into it. Of what sort of prayers are such souls capable ? What can they ask of God, when they so little desire the only good which God esteems, and which He intends for them. With what ardour, with what sincerity can they mourn over the length of an exile, which, if it rested with them they would be well content should never end ; or over tempta-

in which are found these words : *Illa autem Jerusalem quæ in cælo est in quam militat fides nostra.* Scarcely had he pronounced these words than, suddenly struck by a celestial splendour that surrounded him, he gave a loving sigh, then remained absorbed and ravished as a seraph—his eyes raised towards heaven, his arms stretched out, and his face beaming with a supernatural beauty as if he were already clothed as a glorified body. They tried to draw him out of his ecstasy, but it was in vain. Another monk had to read the lesson, and the community, who had had experience in such wonders, continued to recite the Office. They afterwards sang the 'Te Deum'. They said Lauds ; and they had finished before the brother came to himself, and perceiving the attention he had drawn upon himself, made haste to hide himself from everyone.—*Vie du Saint*, II., L., cii.—*Son Esperance.*

\* "Tota vita Christiani desiderium est. . . . Quando quisque est sanctorum et desiderii sancti plenior tanto est ejus in orando fletus uberior."—S. Aug., *de Civitate Dei*, lib. xx., c. xvii.

tions, the dangers of which they do not appreciate—or over the misery and perversity of a world that claims, and alas, perhaps, possesses all their affections?

Ministers of the Lord! do not imitate the children of this world. Do not allow your hearts to grow heavy, or your affections to wander in the pursuit of vanity and lies. Take to yourselves the wings of the dove, and soar above this corruptible and guilty earth and let your souls tend towards God by an ever sustained desire and continuous prayer: *Quærite Dominum et confirmamini; quærite faciem ejus semper.*\* *Seneca, de tranquillitate animi, lib. i., c. xxi.*

### III.

At the same time, whatever help the soul receives from the virtue of Hope in her endeavour to rise up to God, there remains a more powerful means to carry us to Him and to place us in union with Him, and this is pure Love or Charity. Charity is the principal affection of the heart. She wakes up and inspires and directs all the others. She holds or lets loose all the faculties at her will.†

Love is to the soul what weight and attraction are to the body. As each body, and every part of each body, continually tend towards the object which attracts it, and which is the centre of its movements; so the soul and all the powers of the soul—all its affections and all its thoughts tend constantly towards the Being Who charms them, and with Whom they ever strive to be united. So then, if we love God more than creatures,

*CV*  
\* *Ps. ciii. 4.*

† "Amor meus pondus meum; quocumque feror amore feror."—S. Aug., *Epist., lib. ii., ep. lv., No. 18. De Civitate Dei, c. xvii.*



we aspire to Him, we attach ourselves to Him more than to anyone else. When we love God solely and purely, we occupy ourselves with Him, we neither desire nor hope for anything but Him. In fine, the more love we have for God the more sweetness and attraction we find in Him, the more we delight in contemplating Him, in blessing Him, and admiring Him,—the more we esteem what He esteems, the more we dread what He forbids, and the more we seek what He desires. Consequently we pray more ; and the supernatural application of our souls to God becomes sweet, persevering and pure.\* Yes, for a soul possessed by the love of God, prayer is no longer a laborious exercise : it is a joy, it is its very life.† As an unfortunate creature plunged in affliction consciously and unconsciously moans over its sorrow, so the soul continually blesses and prays. She prays as it were unawares—she would be praying whether she desired to pray or not, were she capable of not wanting to pray. Everything becomes an object of prayer to her.‡ The name of God, of Jesus, whatever specially recalls the virtues or the graces of our Saviour never strike her ear without causing her heart to thrill with love, and she replies to the feeling with pious veneration.§ When she pronounces these words they are not to her like ordinary terms ; we perceive by the tone of voice and by the expression of face that she is per-

\* “Qui diligit me, manifestabo ei meipsum.”—*Joan xiv. 21.* “Cum diligitur id quod quantacumque parte cognoscitur, ipsa dilectione efficitur ut melius et perfectius cognoscatur.”—S. Aug., *Serm. xcvi. in Joan.*

† “Non jam est labor sed sapor.”—S. Aug.

‡ “Cantare amantis est, Vox hujus cantoris fervor est sancti amoris.”—S. Aug., *in Psalm cxv.*

§ “Omnia ossa mea dicent : Domine quis similis tibi !”—*Ps. xxxiv.* “Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum.”—*Ps. lxxxiii. 3.*



forming a religious act ; for she infuses into them all her understanding as well as her affections. Does she read the Word of God in the Scripture ? she finds therein a special attraction and relish.\* The words, especially the maxims of her Saviour, are for her as a delicious and celestial harmony.†

Loving the Church of Jesus Christ, though with a love inferior to that which He has for it, this soul busies herself in all that concerns it ; she enters into all the sentiments of the Church, she rejoices in all its joys, she is afflicted with all its sorrows. She does not listen with indifference or with a cold curiosity to the recital of the persecutions to which her brethren are subjected—or of the scandals that distress the Mystical Body of her Lord, or of the perils to which it is exposed. Every blow to religion affects her most sensibly—she considers that God Himself is wounded by it ; and she feels the want to offer Him a reparation worthy of His Justice. Every triumph of grace excites her joy, and as it is the lot of the Church to pass, without ceasing, from trials to success and from prosperity to tribulation, this soul is ever ready with accents of supplication and joy, of affliction and gratitude as the case requires.‡

\* "Unctio seu quidam roseus liquor qui per totam animam se diffundit."—S. Bonar, *de Sept Grad. Contempl.*

† "Litteras de melle cæli melleas et de lumine Dei luminosas."—S. Aug., *Conf., lib. c. iv.* "Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua : super mel ori meo"—*cxviii. 103.* "Sonet Vox tua in auribus meis. Vox enim tua dulcis et eloquia tua jucunda."—*Cant. ii. 14.* "Qui habet sponsam sponsus est ; amicus autem sponsi qui stat et audit cum gaudio gaudet propter vocem sponsi."—*Joan. iii. 29.* "Ubi amor ibi sapor."—S. Bern., *Serm. in Cant. lxxxv. 8.*

‡ "Dominicis gaudens lucris et mœrens damnis—Timet ne pereant homines Christo, contristatur cum perit aliquis Christo. Concupiscit acquirere homines Christo."—S. Aug., *Tract. lx. in Joan.*

Lastly, esteeming solely that which the Divine Master esteems, loving without measure all that He loves, she sighs continually for all His virtues—she venerates all His friends, all those who belong to Him, those whom He associates in His Glory. She is inflamed with the desire to see His Name sanctified in all hearts, and His reign extended to all places as it is in all ages: *Exaltare super cælos Deus, et super omnem terram gloria tua.\* Benedictus Dominus Deus in æternum: fiat, fiat.†* With such sentiments, will it not be in her eyes an honour and incomparable happiness to share even in this life in the employment of the blessed, and thus begin even on earth the heavenly canticle: *Sedenti in throno, et Agno, benedictio et honor et gloria et potestas in sæcula sæculorum!‡*

Thus, Faith raises the soul and inspires it with sentiments of respect, of praise and admiration for the Divine Majesty; Hope makes it sigh for celestial goods by interested, but at the same time, just and sincere wishes. Charity unites it to God and puts it at His disposal, and places in it ardent desires, pure as they are immense and insatiable. The union of these three virtues raises it to a certain power, and into a retirement that facilitates its constant exercise, and forms a disposition the most desirable for praying well, and consequently enabling it to acquit itself worthily and fruitfully of the Divine Office: *In ipsa ergo fide spe et caritate continue desiderii semper oramus.§*

\* *Ps. lxvii. 12.*

† *Ps. xl. 14.*

‡ *Apoc. v. 13.*

§ S. Aug., *Epist. cxxi. ad Prol.* "Domus Dei credendo fundatur, sperando erigitur, amando perficitur."—*Serm. xxii. de Verb. Dom.*

## IV.

The spirit of Prayer thus understood is not only the sacerdotal spirit ; it is the spirit of holiness, it is that of Jesus Christ Himself, the Source of all praise, supplication, thanksgiving, and of all supernatural homage paid to the Divine Majesty in heaven and on earth. So that the obligation of saying the Office puts the priest who would acquit himself worthily of it, under the necessity of becoming holy ; and further Holiness in an ecclesiastic is a guarantee of the perfect discharge of this duty no less than of the proper performance of other sacerdotal duties.

In truth, when we have the spirit of Jesus Christ in the same measure as the Saints, ought it not to be for us a joy—nay, a necessity for us to pray as they did, and thus commune with them? *Lord*, says the Psalmist, a figure of our Saviour—*I am united with all those who honour Thee ; and I share in the worship which they pay Thee.\** All who truly honour God may consider themselves associated in mind and spirit with His Son. Arising from the same source, their inclinations should tend to the same end. Thus they adopt His language and find in the inspired Canticles so exact an expression of their own thoughts that they seem naturally to take the same form and flow in the same channel. This language is as a divine garment which the Holy Ghost has Himself put on them, it suits equally well all their aspirations. It might be said that it perfects them and completes them, that they become more magnificent,

\* *Ps. cxviii. 63.*

more divine, and more holy in taking, in order to manifest them, a formula prepared for them and so worthy of them.\*

“What a consolation I tasted,” says S. Augustine, “when at the time of my baptism I read and meditated in that retreat, the songs of the divine psalmist! What fervour was kindled in my soul by these sacred canticles, so full of faith and charity, and so powerful to heal the miserable swellings of pride. How I wished to make them heard all over the earth, in order to confound the pride of the children of Adam, and to draw them away from vanity and lies! As these divine words struck my ears, the truths they contained insinuated themselves into my heart, and the ardour which they excited caused the tears to flow from my eyes—delicious tears, one of the sweetest joys of my life.”†

Happy the priest who has in his heart the same fervour, the same lively Faith, Hope, and Charity! He tastes in the Divine Office something of these consolations and sweetness. But if he be of a contrary disposition—if he have only natural sentiments—if, instead of the spirit of Christ it is the spirit of the world that animates him, what charm can he find in the prayers he recites? What pleasure can he take in speaking to God

\* “Si cum apostolo psallas spiritu, psallas et mente, cognosces et tu de illius veritate Sermonis quem dixit Jesus—‘Verba quæ locutus sum vobis spiritus et vita sunt’.”—S. Bern., *Serm. vii. in Cant. 5.*

† “Quas tibi Deus meus voces dedi cum legerem psalmos David, cantica fidelia et sonos pietatis excludentes turgidum spiritum! Quas tibi voces dabam in psalmis illis et quomodo in te inflammabar ex eis, et accendebar eos recitare si possem toto orbe terrarum adversus typhum generis humani! . . . Quantum flevi in hymnis et canticis tuis! Voces illæ influebant auribus meis, et eliquabatur veritas in cor meum et exæstuabat inde affectus pietatis et currebant lacrymæ et bene mihi erat cum eis.”—S. Aug., *Conf. i., ix., civ.*

the language of God's friends and saints? He will doubtless pronounce beautiful phrases, but can he think he prays whilst so doing? What confidence can be felt in cold words void of the affection they express? It is true, hearts are naturally sympathetic, and that hearing a good sentiment tends of itself to create a like feeling in us. Experience also teaches that the prayers of the Church have a particular power to touch and move our hearts; but we must not exaggerate their power. Generally, in order to produce their effect, they ask a certain harmony of state and disposition.\* It is not enough for a miser to pronounce the words of renunciation in order to detach himself from his riches—nor for a revengeful man to be able to forgive his enemies, does it suffice to merely read over sentiments of charity and forbearance. So, if instead of the spirit of Christ and the life of Faith, we have in us only the spirit of the world and the life of sense, it is in vain that we recite with our mouth the most magnificent phrases—in vain that we pronounce the most noble praise to the Divine Majesty—or that we express in words to God the most burning desire for His grace and for every virtue; for in reality we pray but little, and God, only accepting the real homage of the heart, we are forced, as it were, to say to ourself, but in a different sense from the psalmist: *Tacui dum clamarem tota die.*†

\* "Verba significantia aliquid ad devotionem pertinens excitant mentes præcipue minus devotas."—S. Thom., 2<sup>a</sup>, 2<sup>æ</sup>, cf. 83, a. 12.

† "Si ore petimus, nec tamen corde desideramus, clamantes tacemus."—S. Greg., in hunc psalm xxxi. 3. "Si quædam anima fidei ipsa dilectio est, quid erit fides quæ non operatur ex devotione, nisi cadaver examine?"

## V.

Very often a priest who is wanting in fervour, does not really understand the words he utters with his lips. It is well known that we cannot understand a sentiment unless we have experienced it. We must suffer or have suffered to know what pain is, and to be able to compassionate it. We must have known want to understand the desire, the prayer, and the gratitude connected with its relief. To love, we must feel it before we can give expression to it. *Numquid intelligis David*, says S. Bernard, *donec ipsos psalmorum affectus non indueris ? \** In a work that love has dictated, it is the heart that ought to enlighten the mind : *Quantum quisque diligit, tantum intelliget.*† Thus, we may apply to the Psalms and to every Office of the Church, those beautiful words of S. Austin :—"Give me a heart that loves God, and the feeling that will make him understand my language will accompany it. Give me a heart that burns with the desire of heaven, that regards itself as a pilgrim in the desert of the world, that thirsts for eternal joys, and never ceases to sigh after its true country, and its feeling will manifest itself in its thoughts. But if I speak to a heart that is cold, to a man who is indifferent, he will not understand my words. Never has a frozen heart understood the language of fervour." *Da amantem et*

\* *De vita solitaria, ad fratres de Monte Dei Apocr.*—Item. Cassian. *Collat.* x., xc.

† S. Bern., *Serm. v. in Cant. 9.*—"Quoniam omnino non potest capere ignitum eloquium frigidum pectus. Quomodo enim græce loquentem non intelligit qui græcum non novit, nec latine loquentem qui latinus non est, sic lingua amoris ei qui non amat barbara erit sicut æs sonans aut cymbalum tinniens."—*Ibid.*, *Serm. lxxix.*



*sentit quod dico. . . . Si autem frigide loquor nescit quod loquor.\**

Perhaps we flatter ourselves that we understand what we repeat because we attach a certain meaning to each term and we seize the connection in the discourse ; but we really comprehend very little although we fancy that nothing has escaped our notice. In truth it is as a child reading a masterpiece of literature or a collection of arguments above his understanding. Each word gives him some notion ; he sees the connection of the different parts, yet the whole fails to make him seize the author's meaning, it does not open to his sight the same thought, nor awaken the same remembrances, and is far from affording him the same charms as it would to a more cultivated mind. Moreover, detached words do not excite in everyone the same ideas, nor give to each one the same light ; far from producing the same impressions, they inflame some minds, whilst they leave others in a state of indifference.† There are saints who were enraptured by the words God, heaven, the Incarnation, so strong and brilliant was the image awakened by them in their souls.‡ How many are

\* S. Aug. in *Joan.*, tr. xxvi., No. 5. *Festa iv.*, post *Pent.*, lect II.

† "Words have not the same signification for all who pronounce them. For example: *Beatus vir qui non abiit in concilio impiorum. . . . Beati immaculati in via.* In repeating them we have but a confused idea of happiness, an idea which does not touch us. But in the mouth of David it was a sentiment that took possession of his heart."—Nicol. *Prayer. Item Mabillon—Treatise on Monastic Studies*, p. ii., ch. ii., § 3.

‡ "Qui ex Deo est verba Dei audit."—*Joan viii.* 47. "God," says F. Lalletment, "gives sometimes to certain souls such admirable knowledge and such feelings respecting certain objects of Faith, that afterwards the bare remembrance, a single word, the mere name of these objects is capable of causing in them rapture and ecstasy." This is what happened to B. Giles of Assisi when he heard the word Paradise pronounced. The like has also happened to

there, on the contrary, to whom these terms seem hidden under a thick veil—*verba abscondita* (Luc. xviii. 34)—and who only find in them an obscure or common meaning! Why is this? Because they have never meditated upon them with attention; or because their worldly hearts are incapable of raising themselves to the region of Divine Ideas and sentiments. *Animalis homo non percipit ea quæ sunt spiritus Dei.\* Diligite Dominum et illuminabuntur corda vestra.†* We must own there are many priests who scarcely understand the daily part of their Office;—even if they understood its significance they would be far from possessing all that is necessary in order to properly acquit themselves of their duty in this matter. )

Prayer, (as we have observed,) is less an action of the mind than an affection of the heart and an exercise of the will. It has for its object to honour God, to give Him thanks, to satisfy His Justice, and to draw down His blessings. So that if we have not the habit of making such acts as these, not only shall we find it difficult to produce them, but it is to be feared that in the depths of our hearts we contradict the pious sentiments of which they are the interpreters. From that moment what does the recitation of the Divine Office

other Saints. We read that S. Theresa was ravished in ecstasy with S. John of the Cross whilst speaking together upon the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. "You must not," afterwards said the Saint, "speak of God to F. John of the Cross, but with discretion, for not only does he go into ecstasy but he causes others to do the same." With regard to S. Theresa she owned that she never heard without a transport of supernatural joy these words of the Credo—*Cujus regni non erit finis*—and these also in the lxxxviii. Psalm—*Misericordias Domini in æternum Cantabo.*

\* *I. Cor. ii. 14.*

† *Eccl. ii. 10.*

become? Only a deceitful language, opposed to reality, against which the conscience of him who uses it cannot fail to protest.\* They say to God they desire Him alone for their portion; and yet they have no regard or esteem but for the things of this world. They repeat that they thirst for His presence—in His sanctuary is their only repose—they wish for no other rule but His adorable Will—and yet they come to Him with regret; they only remain in His temple whilst a strict ministry requires them; they do not fear to transgress His most formal precepts. Every day they proclaim: Happy those who fear the Lord, who meditate on His law, who sing His praises; and yet they themselves carry His yoke unwillingly—they fly from meditation as from a punishment. In beginning the Divine Office their only desire is to get over it as fast as possible.†

God, no doubt, would forgive these carnal sentiments were they only the involuntary movements of a rebellious concupiscence; and however much our nature revolted, He would never tire of accepting the lamentations with which the Holy Ghost inspired us.‡ But if such are the dispositions of our will—habitual and consented to, how can He be pleased with our pretended praises, or how can He accept as a homage acts which we refuse to make our own? It is to upright hearts that belong the

\* “A minimo ad maximum, a propheta usque ad sacerdotem, cuncti faciunt mendacium.”—*Jerem. viii. 10.*

† “Dilexerunt eum in ore suo et lingua sua mentiti sunt ei; cor enim autem eorum non erat rectum cum eo.”—*Ps. lxxvii. 36, 37.* “Qui rogat itaque semper roget; et si non semper precatur paratum semper habeat precantis affectum.”—*S. Ambr. in Psalm cxviii., Octon 19.*

‡ “Ipse cognovit figmentum nostrum: recordatus est quoniam pulvis sumus.”—*Ps. cii. 13.*

praise of the Lord,—it is for them He reserves His graciousness and His bounty.\* *Rectos decet collaudatio. Quam bonus Israel Deus his qui recto sunt corde.*†

It is recorded in the life of the venerable Mary Victoria, foundress of the order of the Annunciation, that one day whilst at prayer our Lord appeared to her and called her several times by her name, as if to confide some secret to her, or to give her some order.—*What dost Thou want with me, oh Lord*, said this holy soul. Jesus answered her, *I have seraphims in heaven; I would also have some on earth!* Then He disappeared, leaving her to meditate on the ardent desire our Lord had to see the Majesty of His Father honoured in the Church, and on the purity, charity, and fervour He requires of His ministers in order to worthily exercise a function which they share with the celestial spirits. *Spiritus est Deus: et eos qui adorant eum in spiritu et veritate oportet adorare.*‡

To be pure, to be fervent, and to be holy—behold, this is what a priest is called upon to be, and to which he ought ever to aim. Had he no other ministry to fulfil but that of public prayer, it would be his duty to aspire to this state, and consequently to employ every means necessary to attain it, meditation, pious reading,

\* “Quemadmodum pedi obtorto atque obliquo calceus rectus non admodum probe aptatur, sic obtortis cordibus divina laus minime convenit. Quoniam itaque recta est Dei laus, recto opus est corde ut ei laus Dei congruat atque conveniat. Quod si nemo Dominum Jesum nisi in Spiritu Sancto dicere valet quomodo laudem referes Spiritum in tuis visceribus rectum renovatumque non habens?”—S. Basil, in *Psalm xxxii.*

† *Ps. xxii. 1; lxxii. 1.*

‡ *Joan. iv. 24. Vita della ven. serva de Dio Madre Maria Vittoria fondatrice dell' ordine dell' Annuntiata.*—P. Spinola, in *Genova*, 1649, b. ii., c. ii.

frequent thought of God—in a word, all the practices of an interior and priestly life.\*

(It is a great mistake to depreciate meditation in order to enhance the importance of Public Prayer; and it is an illusion to neglect daily prayer under the pretext that we have to devote a portion of the day to reciting the praises of God. Do zealous priests make the sanctity of their functions an excuse for neglecting those ordinary means of grace which they are in the habit of recommending to the faithful? Does not their conduct prove the opposite conclusion. Certainly, the Divine Office well recited would fully satisfy the duty of prayer; but the great difficulty is to recite it well. Jacob only became strong against God after he had contemplated Him face to face.† And experience, according to a pious author, teaches that those who never say other prayers but those of the Divine Office pray, in reality, but little, because they pray badly.‡ )

Meditation and the Breviary, far from excluding each other ought to afford a mutual assistance.) The Breviary supplies meditation with the most useful and affective subjects of reflection.§ But it is meditation that makes

\* See Thomassin, *Treatise on the Divine Office*, part I., On its connection with mental and other prayers, and with the reading of the Holy Scriptures and of the lives of the Saints.

† *Orig. Hom. II. in Joan.*

‡ Tronson, *Meditations*. “Falluntur qui volunt semper vel legere vel orare vocaliter. Prosunt hæc vel non sufficient. Consuescat homo orare Spiritu orare et mente dum etiam vocis strepitus aut libri deerit intuitus. Unde, proh Dolor! tanta raritas contemplationem, etiam apud litteratos ecclesiasticos imo theologos, nisi quod vix sustinet aliquis secum solus esse, secum solus meditari!” —Gerson, *de mystic Theol. indust. II, Alph. 66, lit. o.*

§ There is no subject more suitable for meditation to a priest than that which he finds in the Office, whether it be in the common prayers that abound in admirable thoughts and sentiments, or in the Feasts of the Saints, or in the



them enter into the spirit of the Office by filling the soul with those thoughts of which the Breviary is the expression. To be able to say with the Apostle that we sing the praises of God : *Spiritu et mente*,\* we must begin by recollecting ourselves to draw upon us the Spirit of the Lord and to be able to meditate upon His Word : *Os meum Aperui et attraxi spiritum.*† *Os justi meditabitur sapientiam et lingua ejus loquetur judicium.*‡

Was it not thus the Psalmist did. “ My heart was inflamed in meditation ; a Divine Fire took possession of my soul and words escaped from my lips ” : *Concaluit cor meum intra me et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis.*§ “ Each morning, O Lord, were mine eyes lifted towards Thee—I have meditated Thy words, and well considered Thy greatness ” : *Prævenērunt oculi mei ad te diluculo ut meditarer eloquia tua.*|| “ Before I tell Thee my wonder and my thanks, I have called upon Thy help, I have considered well Thy blessings ” : *Repleatur os meum laude ut cantem gloriam tuam tota die magnitudinem tuam.*¶ “ My soul overflowing with love and joy, my tongue gave utterance to these words ” : *Tunc repletum est gaudio os nostrum, et lingua nostra exultatione.*\*\* “ My songs sounded from my lips, but they arose from my heart ” : *Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum.*†† “ My

mysteries of our Saviour which are celebrated and explained by the Church. All Feasts, and especially Mysteries, are sources of grace and instruction. A pastor cannot apply himself too much to meditating on them or to preaching about them to his flock, on the days the Church makes them the special objects of their worship.

\* *I. Cor. xiv. 15.*

† *Ps. cxviii. 131.*

‡ *Ps. xxxvi. 20.*

§ *Ps. xxxviii. 4.*

|| *Ps. cxviii. 148.*

¶ *Ps. lxxv.*

\*\* *Ps. cxxv. 2.*

†† *Ps. xlv. 2.*



prayer is within me": *Apud me oratio Deo vitæ meæ* (Ps. xli. 9).

Behold what a priest should say, behold what he ought to do! Let us then lay up a store for ourselves each morning, as David did, of the knowledge of God, of His grandeur and gifts, recalling to our minds the great truths of religion—the shortness of life, the vanity of the world, the eternity of the future; endeavouring to reanimate our faith, our hope, our charity, by fervent prayer. God will send us His Spirit to help our weakness. He will Himself open our lips, and our mouths shall show forth His praise. We will sing right willingly His praises without effort, according to the impulse of our hearts.† We shall believe that each day we sing a new canticle.‡ Meditation will be a preparation for the Office, and the Office will be as the echo of Meditation; and these two exercises when united will make our lives one continual song and feast: *Cogitatio hominis confitebitur tibi, et reliquæ cogitationis diem festum agent tibi.*§

## VI.

Let us finish this chapter with an example that will serve to confirm the above advice and indicate clearly its practical consequences.

It is told by a bishop of great wisdom and eminent piety, in a work written by him in the fiftieth year of his

\* "Voluntarie sacrificabo tibi et confitebor nomini tuo."—*Ps. liii. 8.* "Quare voluntarie?" asks S. Austin—"quia amo quod laudo."

† "Cantabant quasi canticum novum."—*Apoc. xiv. 3.* "Cantantes et psallentes in cordibus."—*Ephes. v. 19.* "Audiant hoc," says S. Jerome, "quibus psallendi in Ecclesia officium est." *In hunc loc.*

‡ *Ps. lxxv. 11.*

priesthood in order, as he said, to reanimate his first fervour:—A young priest complained to one of his superiors of the difficulty he found in keeping himself in a state of recollection, especially during the Divine Office. His superior, availing himself of the opportunity, put some questions to his young brother on the manner in which he employed his time, then with a sweet gravity he said to him: “If you wish to pray well—with ease and comfort—this is what I would advise you. See rather less of those of your companions who love games, sauntering about, and frivolous conversation; and have an intimate friend with whom you can speak piously from time to time, and who will warn you of your faults. Do not give yourself up unreservedly to external employments; and however pressing your occupations, never neglect your meditation. Consecrate to it faithfully, each morning, your first free moments. Make it, if need be, in the street, on the road, in going to see your sick, at any rate always perform it.\* However recollected you may habitually be, recollect yourself still more before beginning your Office, and in reciting it give a particular attention to the most touching passages. Never fail to collect your thoughts when entering a church at the sight of a crucifix, or of the image of our blessed Lady, or indeed of any object of devotion. . . . It is by these little helps and by such like that we succeed in preserving the sacred fire of fervour and the precious spirit of prayer.” This priest, added the venerable author, liked all the better this advice, for he remembered it was the same he had himself often given

\* “*Meditatio parit scientiam, scientia devotionem, devotio vero perficit orationem.*”—S. Aug., *de Spiritu et Anima*, c. lxx.

to pious persons whom he directed. So after practising it for some time, he had the consolation to recover his love for the Divine Office, and with it all the sweetness of which for some time he had been deprived.\*

\* Devie, Bishop of Belley—*Memoranda for the Clergy, or Meditations and Prayers for the use of the Clergy during Retreats*, 12mo, 1844.

## BOOK TWO.

### *On the Study of the Divine Office and of its different parts.*

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#### CHAPTER I.

THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THE OFFICE.

WE know that in order to acquit ourselves of our duty to the Church and to perform a praiseworthy action, it is not necessary to understand the text of the Office, nor to have before our minds the sense of the words we pronounce. The thought of God and the sincere desire to honour Him are the only essential conditions.\* Never-

\* “ ‘ When I do not understand the prayers which I recite ’ (said a hermit to S. Anthony) ‘ are they therefore useless ? ’ ‘ No, my son,’ answered the saint, ‘ God hears them and He approaches to you, the Devil hears them and flies away. . . . In those moments when the soul prays the best she scarcely knows what she is saying.’ Witness S. Peter on Mount Thabor, ‘ Non enim sciebat quid diceret.’—Marc 9, 5, Cassian, *Coll. ix. 31*. Our Lord Himself testifies that He prefers the smallest homage of humble souls to the speculations of clever minds. “ Audis quid isti dicunt ? ” said the discontented Pharisees. “ Utique,” replied the Saviour, “ nunquam legistis quia ex ore infantium et lactentium perficisti laudem ? ”—*II. Matt. xxi. 16*. This saying explains the esteem in which the Church holds the prayers of the uninstructed, and will serve for an answer to the censures of indiscreet critics. “ Noverint non esse vocem ad aures Dei nisi animi affectum,” says S. Augustine. “ Ita enim non irridebant si aliquos forte animadverterint vel cum barbarismis et solœcismis Deum invocare, vel eadem verba quæ pronuntiant non intelligere, perturbateque distinguere. Ista corrigenda ; sed tamen pie toleranda sunt ab his qui didicerint ut sono in foro sic voto in Ecclesia benedici.”—*De Catech. Rud., c. ix*. Cf. D’Argentré—*Collectio judiciorum*, t. II, p. 75. *An. 1526: Prop. V., Præf. in Matt. d’Erasmus. Censure et observations remarquables.*

theless, it is true that in general we recite but with little devotion what we do not understand.\* Indeed a priest who values as he ought Public Prayers, and holds to observing the spirit as well as the letter of the law, will study the Divine Office in its details; and will not neglect anything that may enable him to penetrate the various mysteries, and seize their meaning.

What in fact is the Church's intention when She puts the Breviary into the hands of Her ministers and requires them to recite it?† It is not to impose on them a purely external practice, or one that merely exercises their lips in reciting a certain number of sacred words.‡ It is not then simply to withdraw them for a portion of the day from worldly employments, and to make it an obligation for them to occupy themselves with God—leaving them in this respect free to follow their own inspirations. She has evidently proposed to herself something more than this. What then was Her design? She desired to direct their thoughts whilst ruling their language and thus to act on their dispositions. She wished them to honour each day some special object, a

\* "Nemo sapienter facit quod non intellegit."—Gloss. super. *Psallite sapienter*.

† This word 'Breviary' is found in the *Micrologia: Micrologus de Ecclesiasticis Observationibus* of the 11th century. It is from this date the work began—*Breviarium, id est orarium breviatum ex copiosiori formatum; sed Compendium Sacre Scripturæ et SS. Patrum ad orandum Deum*. Cf. Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.*, I. lxiv. Up to that time the Psalter, Hymnal, and Responsorial, with the Antiphonal, were so many distinct books to which it was necessary to refer at each office. The Scripture was read from the Bible, the Lessons from the works of the Fathers or in the Homilies, and the Acts of the Saints from the Martyrology. It was then determined in favour of those who could not assist in the choir to collect these different parts into one volume, and thus they were arranged for the different hours as now seen.

‡ "This Scripture is too divine to have no other use than to exert the lungs and please the ears."—Montaigne; quoted by S. F. of Sales, *Controv.* xxvi.

mystery or a saint, by an unanimous homage and by a common act of religion. Thus Her intention was that their hearts and minds should unite in the same affections and in the same thoughts, whilst their lips form the same expressions: *Ut omnes unanimes uno ore honorificent Deum*.\* In this view the external unity of those whose duty it is to recite the Office is but a means. It would lose its characteristic and most of its importance if it had not, in order to complete it, a union of mind and of heart. But how can She attain her object? how will the results She looks for be secured if those who recite Her Office do not understand its language? *Si nesciero virtutem vocis ero ei cui loquor barbarus, et qui loquitur mihi barbarus*.† They will entertain themselves, I admit, with pious thoughts and holy aspirations; but these sentiments being spontaneous and wanting a common direction would be as diverse as the dispositions and characters of the individuals. Not being set before the mind, the object even of these occupations would multiply itself indefinitely. From that moment, whatever it might apparently be, there would no longer be any real unity in that which constitutes the foundation of prayer or rather prayer itself, since it is in its very nature altogether spiritual and interior.‡ Thus, the less the Divine Office is understood by those who recite it the more weakened is this concert of praise, thanksgiving and supplication by which the ministers of the Church ought to accompany here below the Angelic

\* "Deus det vobis idipsum sapere, ut unanimes uno ore honoreficetis Deum."—*Rom. xv. 6.*

† *I. Cor. xiv. 11.*

‡ "Oratio cordis et non labiorum."—*S. Bern., de intern. Dom., c. xviii.*



canticles, and reproduce everywhere, as so many faithful echoes, the divine accents of the Word made flesh. Instead of being common, 'unanimous,' as the Apostle says, this prayer becomes individualised—it is diversified indefinitely in its object and form. We may add that it loses necessarily in fervour ; and that it is very difficult to guard it against routine and dissipation. There are moments when prayer comes from the soul without effort and flows with abundance—it does not require to be excited or sustained. But such moments are rare, and we cannot hope for them to last : *Rara hora, parva mora*.\* The soul very often experiences a real difficulty in prolonging her prayer, attention slackens, the heart as it were dries up, the imagination wanders : *Spiritus vadens et non rediens*.† We feel the want of assistance, of support, of direction. We want to listen as much as to speak to God, at least to know what we ought to say to Him, what grace to ask of Him, for whom we ought to interest ourselves. . . . For all this the Church provides—all this we find in the Office when we understand it. We understand more fully the spirit of God, His advice, His exhortations, and we accordingly see what we ought to reply. It is a union of the most sublime thought with the purest sentiments. It is a varied succession of acts of praise, blessing, and petition, expressed in the most touching and admirable

\* S. Bern., *Serm. xxiii. in Cant.* "Mens humana diu stare in alto non potest. Et ideo contingit quod cum mens orantis ascendit in Deum per contemplationem subito evagetur."—S. Thom., 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup> q. 83, a. 13, ad. 2—q. 180, a. 8, ad. 2—q. 187, a. 4, ad. 3.

† *Ps. lxxvii.* Conf. 32d *propos. of Molinos*—"Verbis et lingua gratias agere Deo non est pro animabus internis," condemned by the Bull "*Cælestis*" of Innocent XI.

manner. Nothing is more likely to render prayer easy, to elevate the mind, warm the heart, and drive away distractions and prevent negligence.\* But since it is a language that addresses itself to the soul, must she not understand it in order to profit by it? Is it not right that she should study it? *Ubi auditus non est, ne effundas orationem*, says the wise man.† In vain do these words sound on the ear if they do not sink into the mind. And, if they be taken in a wrong sense, instead of helping us to pray well, do they not sometimes become a subject of distraction and a source of weariness?

Moreover, the Divine Office not only furnishes us with the most perfect form for praying to God and rendering Him our worship; it gives us at the same time counsels, exhortations, and examples. There is not a lesson in it in which we may not find precious treasures of wisdom and edification. But if we fail to understand these instructions, if we do not know their sense, to what purpose will it be to recite merely the words? What advantages could the soul draw from all these riches: *Sapientia enim abscondita et thesaurus invisus quæ utilitas in utrisque?* ‡

\* "Oratio vocalis incendit animi studium et religionem orantis inflamat quod ad Probam scribit Augustinus hoc modo: *Nonnunquam verbis et aliis ignis ad augendum desiderium sanctum nos ipsi acrius excitamus.*"—*Catech. Conc. Trid., p. iv. de modo orandi 4.* "Sic cum spiritus prophetiæ Elisæo deesset, psalterium fecit applicari, ut prophetiæ ad hunc spiritus per laudem psalmodiæ descenderet atque ejus animam repleret."—S. Greg. M., in *Ezech. i. i., hom. i.*

† *Eccl. xxxii. 6*—"Et quare dicta sunt nisi ut sciantur? Quare audita sunt nisi ut intelligantur." S. Aug., *tr. xxxi. in Joan.*

‡ *Eccles. xli. 18; xx. 32.* S. Thomas explains this verse—*Si orem lingua, spiritus meus orat, mens autem mea sine fructu est (I. Cor. xiv. 14)*, and says positively—"Constat quod plus lucratur qui orat et intelligit quam qui tantum lingua orat. Nam ille qui intelligit reficitur quantum ad intellectum et quantum

Perhaps it will be said, where is there a priest who does not sufficiently understand the Office? To understand it, it is sufficient to be attentive. If it be said mechanically and without understanding, this arises not from its obscurity but from want of attention and goodwill. This, however, is by no means our sentiment. If a priest confines himself to the frequent and mechanical recital of the words of the Breviary, it is, according to our view, not only because he is wanting in energy and faithfulness, but more especially because, like the majority of the clergy, he does not find in it sufficient light, nor a clear meaning, ideas sufficiently grand, thoughts sufficiently precise, or a design so carried out as to sustain well his attention and excite his fervour.

The learned and pious author who recently published an essay "On the intrinsic reasons and intimate arrangement of the Divine Office" expresses with great energy the same conviction. "The principal reason," he remarks, "why the clergy do not esteem or recite as they ought the Divine Office, is because they enter but slightly into the meaning of these prayers, and understand still less the arrangement based on reason that connects them and makes them a whole." \* We do not deny that an intelligent and thoughtful priest may find in the words of his Office ideas capable of striking his mind and

ad affectum, sed mens ejus qui non intelligit est sine fructu refectionis." Cf. D'Argentre—*Collectio Judiciorum*, t. 11, p. 69—*Censure caused by the four propositions of Erasmus on the verse of the Apostle*, An. 1526.

\* *On the Intrinsic Motives of the Canonical Hours*, by Dr. J. Allioli, Provost of the Cathedral of Augsburg. Translated by the Abbé Dodille of the Diocese of Autun, 18°, 1865. "Quamvis devotio magis se habeat ad affectum quam ad intellectum profecto tamen non est devotio sine lumine intellectus."—S. Bonav., *Opusc. De Processu relig.*

touching his heart ; but we think we may lay down as certain and indisputable the two following propositions : first, that the attention of the mind depends much upon the brightness, beauty, and abundance of the objects presented to it ; secondly, that without a serious study of the Breviary a considerable, if not the principal, part of the most interesting and devout beauties contained in it will remain always unknown and will not even be suspected to exist in it. Should anyone call in question this last assertion it would be to us a proof that he is but little versed in Liturgical studies ; and we would then ask him to cast a glance over one of the authorised commentators upon the Divine Office. However accustomed to reciting the Hours he would, we are convinced, be astonished to perceive for the first time, a crowd of wonders, and would feel obliged to extend to the entire Breviary what Bellarmine said to the Pope (Paul V.) about the Psalter : “ There is no book whose use is so familiar to priests and the sense of which is less known.”\* We must then approve the plan of those who established, in Seminaries as well as in the Noviciate of Religious Orders, courses of Liturgical studies wherein, after having shown to young ecclesiastics the exterior rules of the Divine Office and the Rubrics, seek to make them understand and appreciate the Breviary, its nature and origin, and the reason and meaning of its different parts. Nothing can be more conformable than this to the spirit of the Church, nothing more important in the double point of view of instruction and priestly piety. For, whilst we do not wish to depreciate in any manner

\* “ Liber psalmodum quem ecclesiastici omnes legunt et pauci admodum intelligent.”—*Comment. Psalm. Dedicat.*

chanting and ceremonial, of which there seems to be everywhere a revival, we do not hesitate to remark that it would be unreasonable to become absorbed by material forms, neglecting what forms the foundation of the Liturgy for what after all are but its accessories.\* We will only add that the explanations given in these elementary courses are necessarily very brief; and that even supposing they were perfectly understood and retained, much would still be required to complete them, and that consequently they cannot dispense the clergy from the particular study of this subject.

\* A doctor of the middle ages, as bold in his language as in his thoughts, expresses thus his sentiments: *Miramur ut nulla de intelligendis scripturis sint studia sed de cantu tantum, vel de verbis tantum modo formandis non intelligendis quasi ovium balatus plus utilitatis habeat quam pastus.*—Abelard, *Epist. viii. sub fin.* With more consideration S. Augustine says: *David docet ut psallamus intelligenter. Non quæramus sonitum auris sed lumen cordis* (in Psalm xlvii.); and S. Thomas thus: *Nobilior modus est provocandi homines ad devotionem per doctrinam quam per cantum, et ideo Prælati quibus competit per prædicationem et doctrinam animas hominum provocare in Deum, non debent cantibus insistere ne per hoc a majoribus retrahantur.*—2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>æ</sup>, q. 91, a. 2. Cf. Olier, *Lett. xciii., on chanting.*

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE PSALTER—THE NECESSARY IDEA OF IT AND THE STUDY REQUISITE.

IN the "Office" we may distinguish three different objects of study. 1st, The inspired text or passages borrowed from the Holy Scripture ; 2nd, The words of which the Holy Ghost is not the author, but which the Church has thought fit to insert in Her Office, and which derive their authority from the use She makes of them ; 3rd, The reunion, order, and combination of the several passages from which results the character of the "Office," its features, and the sense and design of its different parts. Each of these objects needs a deep study and requires great reflection. But this is not the place to undertake such a work ; and therefore we shall merely endeavour to establish some principles capable of clearing the way and directing primary effort.

The first element of the Divine Office—that which constitutes its foundation and furnishes almost all its invocations and, properly speaking, all its prayers, is the Psalter.\* From the other books of the Bible the Breviary has borrowed certain portions which are read at long intervals, often only once a year ; but this one (the

\* This is why the Breviary was originally called the *Psalter*, and the recitation of the Office *Psalmody*.



Psalter) is found in it entire ; and is distributed in a manner that permits it to be recited each week ; and if some parts are omitted in the recitation, others are substituted, and come again periodically in quicker succession. There is no book of which it is so important to possess the right meaning ; and it will not therefore surprise us to find that the holy Doctors have made so many comments upon it, and have bestowed so many words of eulogy upon the Psalter.\* The first condition, then, for understanding the Psalms is to avoid scrutinising details and examining difficulties, but rather to have an exact idea of the book, the same in fact which the Church has when She gives it to Her ministers as an authentic expression of Her sentiments towards God and with which they themselves ought to be animated.

For one who does not believe in Revelation, and even for many ill-instructed Christians, the Psalms are nothing more than beautiful poetry, sublime hymns, soarings towards God with which a holy king was in an admirable manner inspired, but without any other object, so to speak, than the circumstances in which he found himself or the impressions they may have made upon him.† So that, whatever its merit, it is only a human production of a restricted character ; and if each of the faithful is authorised to appropriate the words and adapt them to

\* Already in 1709 P. Lelong had noted 630 special commentaries upon the Psalter.—*Bibliotheca Sacra*. Dom Calmet in 1724 said that there were more than a thousand upon this subject.—*Dictionnaire de la Bible*.

† The most common opinion is that all our psalms were David's composition, and this, according to S. Augustine, is the most probable one. *Mihi credibilius videntur existimare qui omnes illos centum et quinquaginta Psalmo jeus operi tribunt*.—*De Civit. Dei*, xvii. Cf. Luc. xx. 12.

his own feelings, this can only be said to be the case by a natural figure and happy concurrence.

Very different is the idea which the Church has of the Psalms—very different the opinions which are held by the holy Doctors and Fathers. In their belief it is the Holy Ghost Who is the author of them ; and what He would illustrate through the instrumentality of the Psalmist is not the heart of the Prophet-King alone—it is not the personal sentiments with which the various events of his life inspired him, but an object infinitely vaster and more absorbing—the Heart even of the Man-God ; it is the thoughts and affections which animated our Divine Master, and with which He would animate all His members.

From this point of view the Psalter ought to be regarded as the infallible translation into a language at once divine and human of the supreme and universal prayer of which the Incarnate Word is the foundation, and which, by a mysterious communication, He infuses into the hearts of all who are united with Him.\* Consequently they (the Psalms) are the whole collection of Christian prayers—all the acts of adoration, thanksgiving, and praise of which Jesus is the centre, and of which our souls, rendered divine by grace, become capable—revealed, made sensible, and offered to God in a manner worthy of their principle and of their object ; they form the visible flame of that interior fire with which our Saviour desired His own Heart and ours should be consumed ; they are the earthly echo of the everlasting harmony which is unceasingly sounding in

\* " Per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti in unitate Spiritus Sancti omnis honor et gloria."—*In miss.*

heaven before the throne of the Sovereign Majesty. "*Per quem laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes. Ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus per Jesum Christum.*"\* Not that the Psalms had no human author—that in their composition they show not their earthly origin and the particular circumstances in which they were compiled. Still, if it can be disputed that man concurred in the work—that the Psalmist engaged in it voluntarily and freely as secondary cause, it is no less certain that the first and principal Author is God and His Holy Spirit;† that before God all times as all places are present; that from the beginning of the world Jesus Christ was the object of all His thoughts, the end of all His designs; and that this Divine Son has ever been in the eyes of His Father the Head of the predestined race—the model of the elect—the Holy One by nature—the one Principle of grace, light, charity, and salvation in the bosom of humanity. Moreover, Faith teaches us that the just of all ages have an intimate connection with our Lord; that all the saints are gathered up and, in a manner, identified in His person, since they form but one body with Him—animated by the same mind and moved by the same principle. *Quia in ipso complacuit omnem plenitudinem inhabitare.*‡ The Psalmist then is not only a visible figure of the Man-God, but he is also His most complete interpreter. Whilst he perfectly represented the future Messiah to

\* *I. Pet. iv. 11.*

† "Dixit David filius Isai; dixit vir cui constitutum est de Christo Dei Jacob egregius psalter Israel; Spiritus Domini locutus est per me, et sermo ejus per linguam meam."—*II. Reg. xxiii. 2.* "Lingua mea calamus scribæ velociter scribentis."—*Ps. xlv. 2.*

‡ *I. Coloss. i. 19.*

the people of old, he participated in advance and in an equal degree in His interior life, views, spirit, and sentiments on all things, in such a manner that the dispositions that animated him were at the same time his own, those of our Saviour and of all the saints. They were his own because they were in his soul and came forth from his power; they were those also of our Saviour since they existed only in the prophet through his dependence upon his divine Head; lastly, they were those of all the saints, since Jesus Christ equally desired to communicate Himself to all, and because He remains everywhere identical with Himself.\* So that having only one spirit and one heart with Jesus Christ and His living members, the Psalmist could have but one language with them. From this we can understand that the Holy Ghost, Who inspired David with His Canticles, whilst giving him His sentiments, did not limit His views to the person of the Psalmist, but directed them, in the first place, upon Him of Whom David was so lively an image; and that,

\* "The Holy Ghost, who knew from all eternity the praises that Jesus Christ rendered to God and would render to Him when He came into the world, began by infusing them in advance into the soul of David, father of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, and figure of Him according to the spirit. In this well-disposed heart the Holy Ghost took pleasure in producing the same sentiments as in that of Jesus; not, however, in all their perfection, nor approaching their extent, but as much as was requisite for the maintenance and nourishment of the Church, which never tires of reading them, and finds Her sustenance in them during Her pilgrimage here below. For, waiting for the possession of Her Beloved who is Her sole good, all Her consolation is to hear the voice of Her Spouse—*Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox enim tua dulcis* (Cant. ii. 2); and in listening to the accents of the prophet She hears Him, for David was found a man according to God's heart (Acts xiii. 22), who having passed through the same conditions as the Man-God, was able to participate in all His dispositions." —Olier, *Saints Ordres*, p. iii., c. iii., *Memoires*, I., 424.

afterwards, extending them to all who should participate more or less, as did this holy king, in the effusions from this divine source, He proposed to give, to all the children of God, to all the members of Jesus Christ, the means of uniting themselves to their Divine Head in one and the same concert of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication. *Scribantur hæc in generatione altera et populus qui creabitur laudabit Dominum.\**

Thus do we explain what the holy Doctors teach : that the Psalms are full of Jesus Christ—that they are His instrument, His voice, His language : that they are the language of the members as well as of the Head—a single yet at the same time a manifold voice in which are expressed and mingled all the blessings of heaven and earth—all the desires of charity—all the accents of gratitude—all the supplications of want.† Thus also is understood what our Saviour expressly stated : that He is the object of the Psalms, and that the Psalms

\* *Ps. ci. 19.* Saint Paul quotes as Christ's the words of David—"Propter quam causam non confunditur fratres suos vocare dicens : *Nuntiabo nomen tuum fratribus meis ; in medio Ecclesiæ laudabo te*".—Heb. ii. 13. The Prophets go so far as to give to the Messiah the name of David in a manner to identify in some sort the Psalmist with the Saviour (Jer. xxx. 9). *Servient Deo suo et David regi suo quem suscitabo eis*.—Ezech. xxxiv. 23, 24. *Suscitabo pastorem unum, servum meum David. . . . Ego ero eis in Deum, et servus meus David princeps in medio eorum*.—Osee iii. 5, etc.

† The Fathers are unanimous upon this point : but it is S. Augustine who inculcates most strongly this truth. He says :—"Commendamus sæpius nec nos piget iterare quod vobis utile est retinere Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum plerumque loqui ex se, id est ex persona sua, quod est caput nostrum ; plerumque ex persona corporis sui, quod sumus nos et Ecclesia ejus ; sed ita quasi ex unius hominis ore sonare verba, ut intelligamus caput et corpus in unitate integritatis consistere nec separari ab invicem : tanquam conjugium illud de quo dictum est : *Erunt duo in carne una*. Si ergo agnoscamus duos in carne una, agnoscamus duos in voce una."—*In Psalm xl.* Item *in Psalm xviii., in Psalm xxx., etc. De Civit Dei, I., xvii., xv., etc.*



speak of Him. Thus, likewise, is explained the use which He makes of them in different circumstances—particularly on the Cross when He applies their words to Himself.\*

So now we can see the providential reason of these sacred canticles—brought forth quietly amidst an obscure and distant nation, and an uncultivated antiquity—spread over the world and remaining to-day, after the lapse of three thousand years, almost the sole language of Christian peoples enlightened and sanctified, in their communications with God; the wonder, the delight of all pure and elevated minds here below; the food of every soul that has received from on high zeal for virtue and a taste for things divine!

For here is an indisputable fact, and one which, as regards the subject that occupies us, amounts to a demonstration. It is certain that the Christian Church from Her very beginning has adopted and everywhere made use of the Psalms as the most perfect expression of Her religious duty towards God.) She sings them in Her temples by the voice of priest and people; She imposes upon Her ministers their daily recital; She recommends them to Her members; so that, in short, no production, divine or human, has ever had such renown or ever enjoyed such popularity. What the Doctors of the Church wrote fourteen or fifteen centuries ago that David sang the praises of the Lord in every country of the world,†—we see it ourselves with our

\* *Matth. xxvi. 47.*—"Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti me?"  
*Luc. xxiii. 46.*—"Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum." *Joan xv. 25.*—"Odio habuerunt me gratis."

† "In omnibus urbibus, pagis, agris, terminis, montibus et collibus, terrarum, inque omni regione, David per piorum linguas Deum laudando cele-



own eyes, and we may proclaim the fact with greater reason than they could :—"The burning words of the Psalmist still resound in every part of the world. The sun never ceases to shine upon some churches whose roofs resound with these sacred hymns. They are sung at Rome, Geneva, Madrid, London, Quebec, Quita, at Moscow, Pekin, and Botany Bay; they are murmured though faintly even in Japan" (Demaistre, *Soirées*, t. 11). How then can we admit that the Holy Ghost, Who beholds the future as He does the present, Who could not be ignorant of this exceptional destiny, Who has Himself announced it in most express terms \*—would not have held it in mind, if we may so speak whilst inspiring them,—or that He would have failed to adapt the means to the end, and that, instead of making these songs the expression of the sentiments of the whole Church towards God He had narrowed His designs, and limited His intentions to the mere rendering with exactitude, the chance and passing mental disposition of a momentary

brat."—Theod. in *Psalm xxxiv. 19.* "Et toto orbe canuntur et non est qui se abscondat a calore."—S. Aug., *Conf., l. ix., c. iv.* "Psalmus benedictio populi est, vox Ecclesiæ, fidei canora confessio. Diei ortus psalmum resultat, psalmum resonat occasus. Hic omni dulcis ætati, hic utrique aptus est sexui. Cantatur ab imperitoribus, jubilatur a populis. Certant clamare singuli quod omnibus proficit."—S. Ambr., *Præf. in Psalm.*

\* The Psalmist, in fact, declares on several occasions that he will sing the praises of God *in the midst of the world, in the assembly of the people, among the Gentiles, until the end of ages.* "Confitebor tibi in nationibus Domine."—*Ps. xvii. 50.* "Confitebor tibi in populis, Domine, et psalmum dicam tibi in gentibus."—*Ps. lvi. 10.* "Confitebor tibi in Ecclesia magna: in populo gravi laudato te."—*Ps. xxxiv. 18.* "In Ecclesiis benedicam te Domine."—*Ps. xxiv 12.* "Narrabo nomen tuum fratribus meis: In medio Ecclesiæ laudabo te."—*Ps. xxi. 23.* "Psalmum dicam nomini tuo in sæculum sæculi, ut reddam vota mea de die in diem."—*Ps. lx. 8.* "In petra exaltavit caput meum super inimicos meos: circuivi et immolavi in tabernaculo ejus hostiam vociferationis: cantabo et psalmum dicam Domino."—*Ps. xxvi. 6.*

life? No, it is not thus that we may interpret Divine Actions. It would be unreasonable to suppose there were less elevation, wisdom, and perfection in His designs than in the effects which He has produced. Even had He not explained Himself on this Head, had tradition spoken less clearly, it would suffice to those who believe in Divine Wisdom and who meditate on Its works, to behold what is the actual position of the Psalmist's songs, in order to understand what they were from the first day that they were sung.

Thus we see the aim, the object, the divine reason of the Psalms. We possess the key to them. We hold the torch that sheds light upon all their mysteries. We know how to place ourselves in order that we may discover all their depth, measure their breadth, and comprehend their variety, harmony and general meaning. It is ever and always Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the Chief Pontiff, the sole-worthy Adorer of His Father, Who is in the presence of the Divine Majesty. It is ever He Who prays—it is always He Who speaks, in whatsoever manner it may be : *Sermo ejus per linguam meam*.\* Sometimes it is in His own Name exclusively, as the only Son of God ; on these occasions His words, taken literally, beseech Him alone ; His members can only appropriate them so far as their union with their Head shall make them sharers in His greatness and His destiny. Thus, He Himself explains His eternal Generation, His birth in time, His Priesthood, His Kingdom, and His different mysteries.† More

\* II. Reg. xxiii. 2.

† For example, in the ii., xv., xxi., lxxi., cix. Psalms. “In psalmis itaque nobis non solum nascitur Jesus sed etiam salutarem illam suscipit corporis

frequently He speaks in the name of the Church and of all Her children, as the Head of a Body whose members multiplied in an infinite manner, passing through a thousand changes, and experiencing all kinds of necessities, find themselves at once in the most diverse conditions and feelings.\* Then His thoughts spread out, they become generalised, in proportion as His language lowers itself and approaches ours. Sometimes, we might imagine, that He is limiting His design to a single nation, circumstance, or event ; but not so, His ideas go beyond His expressions ; what seems the object of His thoughts is but its image, an emblem, a symbol ; or else it is a type including every kind entire. Israel is the faithful people, the object of Heaven's special love. Jerusalem is the Holy City, situated on a hill and raised upon an immovable foundation ; Sion, the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, is the eternal sanctuary in which the Lord dwells, and where He deigns to listen to our prayers.† But it is especially the affections and prayer that He delights to express. In order to adapt His language to the prayers with which His Spirit must inspire His members, our Divine Head varies His voice in many ways. He places

passionem, quiescit, resurgit, ascendit ad cœlum, sedet ad dexteram Patris."—S. Ambr., *Præf. in Psalm i.*

\* "Vox sermonum ejus ut vox multitudinis."—*Dan. x. 6.* "Ego sum, unus sum ; mecum omnes in unitate unum sunt."—S. Aug., *Ser. cxxxviii., Lect. ix., festi S. Iren.*

† "Aperiam in parabolis os meum," says the Psalmist.—*Ps. lxxvii. 2 ; Matt. xiii. 35.* "The odes of Pindar are, as it were, but a kind of dead body whence the souls have departed for ever. Olympus, Elis, Alpheus exist no longer. . . . David, on the other hand, defies time and space, because he has taken no note of times or circumstances. He has sung God alone, and Jerusalem ; truth, like himself, immortal still remains for us. Where we are, she altogether is ; and David it is who renders her present to us."—Demaistre, *Soirées, t. 11.*

Himself in every possible situation. He borrows the very accents of His creatures. One while He humbles Himself before His Father's Majesty, He groans, He asks pardon and forgiveness: He is the universal Penitent, overwhelmed by the weight of all our sins, broken by our united repentance.\* Then, reflecting upon the favours of God Whose mercy fills the world, He utters a cry of gratitude and joy; He redoubles His thanksgivings, and invites every creature to rejoice with Him. Again, mindful of man's weakness, beholding his poverty, and seeing on all sides his needs and dangers, with tears He calls for help from above, He implores His Father to listen to His cry, He brings before Him all the motives that may induce Him to hear our supplications. In fine, every Psalm is a living picture of the work of His soul, both in Himself and in His mystical Body; in such wise, that whatever our condition, no better means could be found of uniting ourselves to the Holy Ghost and of seconding the power of His grace, than taking these canticles as the laws and interpretation of His disposal of all things.† Should this idea appear

\* "Compassione clamat, non attritione: quomodo solet lingua dicere, calcato pede: calcas me."—S. Aug. in *Psalm lxxxvi.* 5.

† "The Divine Word hidden in the Church, which He has taken for His Spouse in order to further His design and to help Him to praise God, expresses through her, in a sensible manner, the beauty of God which she bears within Himself. He clothes Himself with her to praise God more tenderly, and she clothes herself with Him in order to praise Him truly; so that the Word and the Church are but one single praise of God, and the Word and the Church are like a voice repeated by as many echoes as there are saints. It is a wondrous Word and astonishing praise. It is an inconceivable concert and incomprehensible voice. Oh, that I may be lost in Thee, oh Divine Word! Oh, may I ever, oh my God, be united to Thy adorable Son, my Divine Master, in order that I may honour and glorify Thee without ceasing! Had I as many tongues and hearts as these wretched spirits that blaspheme Thee, I would

an exalted one, it is not on that account less solid or practical. To become well penetrated with it is to put ourselves into the state to understand and appreciate the Psalms. In order to acquire a sufficient knowledge of them it is only requisite to consider them frequently in this light, and with earnestness, humility and simplicity. By dint of repeating them and meditating on them, *legendo et inhiando*, we end by penetrating into all their secrets. *Qui querit, invenit.\**

"It is with books," says S. Gregory, "as with their authors. Suppose that we come in contact with one of them, at the first glance we shall only see the external man; but if we often renew our intercourse with him, and become familiar with him, the intimacy of these relations will enable us to know with certainty his innermost sentiments. And so," continues this Holy Doctor, "when we first take up a book we only see in it whatever is outward, apparent, literal: but in proportion as we again and again return to it, and more ear-

willingly employ them to sing Thy praises and to glorify Thee in their stead! How gladly would I multiply my heart into as many creatures as Thou hast formed, that I might glorify Thee on earth!"—Olier, *Esprit*, I., 312. On the argument that the Psalms are the expression of our Saviour's sentiments, and that their principal objects are Jesus Christ and the Church, our readers may consult *A Treatise on the Sacrifice of Praise established by David under the Law, sanctified and continued by Jesus Christ under the Gospel*, by Father Pacificus de Calais. Avignon, 1740.—a solid and pious work. *The Psalms explained in their Prophetic Sense, and referred to Jesus Christ*. Paris, 1766; 12mo. By F. Goudon. *The Rules of S. Augustine for understanding the Psalms*, small 12mo. The preface of the Bible de Vence upon the Psalms, by Rondet, Art. iii., Nos. 3, 4, 5; and many articles by the same author in the *Journal Ecclesiastique*, April and May, 1763; March, June, and September, 1764, etc.

\* *Matt. vii. 8.* "Qui a Jesu Christo didicerunt mites esse et humiles corde, plus cogitando et orando proficiunt quam legendo et audiendo."—S. Aug., *Ep. cxii.*



nestly study it, the deeper do we penetrate its ideas. We discover the hidden meaning contained in it" (Moral. in *Job*, iv., c. 1).

It is thus many Doctors have studied the Bible, particularly the Psalms; and it was by their faithfulness in considering them from the standpoint of Faith as the expressions of our Saviour's thoughts, rather than by their researches and labours, that they were enabled to unite so holy a doctrine with such touching examples and sublime views in the commentaries they have left us.\* Assuredly we would not hold in small esteem the literal sense of the Psalms, nor would we dissuade anyone from smoothing by study the difficulty it presents. Far from it, we acknowledge the usefulness of such a task, which should, as much as possible, take precedence of every other.†

It is important to have acquired a sure knowledge of the expressions and phrases peculiar to the Vulgate,

\* "In scriptura tantum distat studium a lectione quantum amicitia ab hospitio, socialis affectio a fortuita salutatione."—*De vita solit. Ad fratr. de Monte Dei*, in opp. S. Bern. Some excellent reflections on this subject may be found in the Abbé Derancé's *Reponse au Traité des Etudes monastiques*, Part. II., Ch. II., § 2, pp. 239, 272, 337.

† "Ne quaquam nobis ut psittacis merulisque vernandum est. In Psalterio legitur: Beatus populus qui intelligit jubilationem."—Cassiod., *Expos. Psalm Prolog.* "Interpretationem psalmorum studio assequantur unde mens animusque ad salutarem effectum accendatur."—*Concil. Mediol. iv.* "Would it not be a shame," says Collet in his *Treatise on the Divine Office*, p. 1., c. viii., No. 18, "that a priest who for long years has recited the 'Office' should be unable to answer a young student who might ask him the meaning of *Tecum principium*? . . . To such an one would be applicable the reproaches S. Chrysostom made to the faithful of his Church: *Vos qui ab infantia ad extremam senectutem psalmum hunc meditanter nihil aliud quam verba perpetuo tenetis quid aliud facitis quod et absceso thesauro assidetis, et obsignatam crumenam circumfertis; et nec curiositate incitati estis ut diceretis: Quid est quod dicitur?*"—*In Psalm cxl. 202.*



especially as regards the psalter\*—to know the occasion, the argument, the plan of each psalm, at least of those which are the most frequently repeated; and to have cleared up the obscurity of certain verses. But we would not have you attach too much importance to this study of details. Trust us, there is something better to do than stopping to fathom a grammatical difficulty, or to discuss the meaning of names, or to explain incidental phrases, to rectify mistakes, or note the differences of translations.† From the standpoint of piety, which is the chief one where it is a question of a prayer, the essential thing is not the ability to give account of such an expression or such a period, but to become penetrated with the thoughts of the sacred writer, and put our heart and mind in unison with him.‡ What matters it if we neglect the particular meaning of a term or verse, or if we hazard an interpretation less conformable perhaps to the rules of the language, if it better accords with the circumstances of the time, or with our own state of mind? Piety, ingenious in its methods, and multiform as is Divine Grace, requires a certain liberty of action.§

\* "Scriptura sacra quomodo loquitur sic intelligenda est. Habet linguam suam; quicumque hanc linguam nescit turbatur."—S. Aug., *tr. x. in Joan 2.*

† "Quæstiones magis præstant quam ædificationem."—*I. Tim. i. 4.* "Ecclesia dissonantes versiones adeo indifferenter habet ut cum psalmo xciv. Vulgater legat. Quadraginta annos *offensus* fui, nos contra in psalmo canamus *proximus*, diversissimo sensu, sed utrobique sano."—Bossuet, *Dissert. in Psalm v. 26.*

‡ "Non delectabit psalmus per singulos versiculos anxie excussus ac velut articulatim incisus," adds Bossuet, *Dissert. in Ps. vii. 37.* "The heart is fatigued as well as the head if we give it too much to do. It is the heart which dislikes that which is methodical. You should but show it the object, and then leave it to act: otherwise, you restrain, disgust, and repel it."—F. Lami, *Reflex. sur le Traité de la priere publique.*

§ "Multiformis gratia Dei."—*I. Petr. iv. 10.*

On the other hand, if we have that notion of the Psalms which it has been here attempted to give, we shall lack neither light nor occupation whilst repeating it. If a verse escape our notice, it gives the mind time to meditate on the preceding one, just as a pause in a concert gives the ear leisure to enjoy all the charm of the foregoing melody.\* Supposing, then, we had but realised the name of God, which is so frequently repeated, would not the thought of His Greatness, and of our obligations towards Him, be for our soul a subject for reflection as fruitful as it is salutary?†

Such was the sentiment of an ecclesiastic of great merit whose rule of life and private reflections it was thought proper to publish after his death:—"I am convinced by experience," says he, "that for the due recital of the Psalms, a long study of the commentators is not of much use. Such remembrance as I preserved of my studies in this line distracted me rather than assisted me to pray. In fact, by the advice of my director, I have limited myself, by the help of P. Berthier and

\* "Often," says again P. Lami, "when we are strongly moved by a verse, the best thing to do is to close the mind's eye to those that follow, that we may the longer enjoy the salutary impression."—*Reflex. sur le Traité de la priere publique.*

† We may even derive advantage from the obscurities we meet with, for according to the remark of Bossuet—*Explication de la prophetic d'Isaïe, Difficulté*, Let. iii.—it is not less beautiful or less meritorious to be willing to ignore what God chooses to hide from us than to believe and confess that which He pleases to allow us to understand. He has designedly united in His word light and shade, as was the case with the luminous cloud that conducted the Israelites. "In nube diei."—*Ps. lxxxvii. 14.* Both serve His end. "In columna nubis loquebatur eis."—*Ps. xcvi. 6.* "Sicut tenebræ ejus ita et lumen ejus."—*Ps. cxxxviii. 12.* "Locis apertis fami obscuris fastidis occurratur."—S. Aug., *De doct. Christ., I., II., cvi.* "Pascit enim manifestis; exercet obscuris."—*Id., Tr. xlv. in Joan.*

Bellarmino, to discover in each psalm, and in a certain number of its verses, a few touching thoughts and reflections: of these I made a collection, and tried to penetrate myself with their spirit.\* At last these thoughts became familiar to me, and now they offer themselves of their own accord to my mind, and sweetly nourish my soul during the Divine Office."† We would give the same advice. To throw light upon difficult passages, the young ecclesiastic should seek first in some commentator for the literal sense; but for this purpose let him choose one short and clear—Bellarmino, for example, who is at once so rich and so safe in his piety.‡ He might without inconvenience limit

\* After his death a Breviary was found, in 4to, quite filled with notes wherein this good priest had collected in a *resumé* the fruits of his reading and reflections upon the Divine Office. It would be well, we think, were his example more generally followed. A copy of the Breviary, of large size, would cost but little, and might do good service. The most natural plan would be to note briefly in the margin the dominant idea of each psalm—its connection with the feast of the day, the more obvious sense of such verses as seem obscure, the translation of certain names of men, countries, and cities, the author and date of books and hymns, the source of the responses, of versicles and anthems. This Breviary might be used in private or in church. Its notes might be re-read occasionally, and others as they presented themselves, if of a luminous and edifying character, might be added to them. The *Chronicles of Cluny* preserve the memory of a holy monk who made to himself a law of all these practices: *Psalterium glossatum semper circumferebat; quoniam psalmos non perfunctorie, ut quibusdam moris est, sed summa cum attentione et devotione canebat. Ubi si quid quod non intelligeret offendisset ad glossas statim oculos convertibat.*—*Bibl. Clun.*, p. 599.

† "Labores manuum tuarum quia manducabis beatus, es et bene tibi erit."—*Ps.* cxxvii. 2. "Bibe aquam de cisterna tua."—*Prov.* v. 15. "This, to my mind, is the best plan."—Devie, *Memorial du Clergé*.

‡ This is the same advice which Mabillon gives to those religious who are but little acquainted with different languages.—*Traité des études monastiques*, p. 11, c. ii. An excellent abridgment of Bellarmine for the use of young ecclesiastics has been published under the title, *Psalterium Davidis brevi ac succincta paraphrasi explicatum ex Bellarmine depromptum*, often reprinted, and again

himself to the notes of Menochius or of Bossuet.\* But, after the labour bestowed upon the literal signification, if he wishes to enjoy the Psalms and derive benefit from them, he should proceed farther : he should fathom details and seek out the hidden sense, *quod intrinsecus latet*.† He should remark and gather with care every pious thought, touching reflection, every moral application that each verse is capable of raising in the soul, and thus becoming the nourishment of her Faith and Religion.

In this attempt we shall not want for guides. The difficulty of choosing results from their very number. We would only observe that for such as have at their

recently by Maritti (H.); Turin, 1867, 2 vols., 12mo. Many commentaries upon the Psalter (from the Liturgical view) have been likewise composed of late for the use of ministers of the altar ; for example, F. Reisner, *Nova methodus seu ratio psalmos in Officio divino . . . intelligendi facilius, dicendi religiosius, usurpandi fructuosius*. S. J. Augustæ Vandelicorum, 1775, in 8vo. Valent. Talhofer, *Erklärung der Psalmen, mit besonderer Rücksicht an deren liturgischen Gebrauch in Brevier*; Regensburg, 1857, &c. Engeln, *Psalterium cum canticis*; Munster, 1858. P. Schouppe, S.J., *Cursus S. Scripturæ*, 2 vols. in 8vo ; Parisiis, 1870.

\* Bossuet, who so much loved the holy Scriptures, esteemed in a particular manner the Psalms. He had studied them and meditated upon them whilst a canon of Metz; according to Cardinal de Bausset, he had even attempted a versification of them. When Bishop of Meaux, he dedicated to the chapter and clergy of that diocese a short *Explanation of the Psalter*, in which by sundry brief, precise and clear notes he clears up the chief difficulties of the Vulgate. This work will be found very useful, especially the excellent *Dissertation* with which it is prefaced. In it Bossuet has collected together all the useful advice and edifying remarks supplied by his reading, his genius, and his faith. With the most practical details it combines the most exalted views. (See Note 3 at the end of the volume.)

† *Cant. IV., i. 3.* "Si enim hoc tantum volumus intelligere quod sonat in littera aut parvum aut prope nullam ædificationem de divinis lectionibus capiemus."—S. Aug., *Serm. cci. de temp, lect. iv., Dom. ix., post Pentec.* "Littera occidit si absque spiritus condimento glutieris."—S. Greg. M., *Epist. I., xii., Ep. 6.*

disposal the works of the Fathers, they can need no better masters. Their footsteps have been followed, their labours have yielded gain, attempts have been made to adopt their methods and to become inspired with their spirit; yet, after all, no commentary can replace the writings of S. Augustine, of S. Athanasius, of S. Basil, or of Origen, on the Psalter; no other writers can excite such a high notion of the Psalms—none can compare with them in illustrating their excellence, their beauties and riches. It is then from these sources that we must be content to draw. If unable to reach them, let us choose from the various streams such as have collected most abundantly and in the greatest purity their living and health-giving waters.\*

What we have said of the Psalms applies equally to every fragment of Scripture inserted in the Breviary—such as the Lessons, Little Chapters, and Antiphons. Would it, then, be reasonable to repeat for years, and even until death, words deemed divine, and which express the most important truths, without taking occasion

\* We find in the 3rd volume of the complete works of B. Tommaso (4to, Rome, 1748) a remarkable commentary upon the Psalms. Each psalm is preceded by an argument which indicates its object, its literal and spiritual sense, after the writings of Ven. Bede, Eusebius of Cesarea, S. Athanasius, and S. Jerome. It is followed by a very exact and clear paraphrase, and by divers liturgical pieces referring to the same subject. *Les psaumes mis à la portée des fidèles et appliqués à N. Seigneur, d'après les principaux commentateurs et les Pères de l'Eglise*, par M. Padé (1858-1860), might also be advantageously consulted. The author dilates specially upon the figurative meaning. S. Chrysostom, Theodoret, S. Jerome, S. Augustine, Dom Calmet, and Bossuet are the chief sources whence he draws the materials of his work. *Les Psaumes de David et les Cantiques de l'Eglise avec de Courtes notes tirées des auteurs sacrés et de S. Jerome en particulier*, par Dom J. Martiary, editeur de S. Jerome, 12mo, 1705. *Le Psautier avec des notes tirées de S. Augustin*, composed in the same manner as the preceding, is from a Jansenist author, Nicholas Fontaine, and should be read with caution.

to assure ourselves that we clearly understand them—or without being able to say with certainty from what book they are taken, to what age they should be referred, by what authors they were written, to what subject they allude, and why they were inserted in the Office of the day?



## CHAPTER III.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE FATHERS.

AFTER the Psalms and the various portions of the Bible, that which ought specially to be studied is its non-inspired or human part—that is to say, the homilies of the Fathers, the legends of the Saints, the hymns and responsaries.\*

#### *The Homilies.*

It would be useful to read in the very works of the holy Doctors those passages that are taken from them. Nothing would be more suited to acquire a knowledge of their value and signification—nothing more interesting in every way. But if this be not possible, we should endeavour at least to obtain some insight into the lives and works of those whom the Church calls her Fathers; and next, we should try to clear up by study and reflection the difficulties to be met with in some of the most frequently repeated passages.† What surprises

\* “In orationibus privatis non semper necesse est loqui Scripturæ Sacræ verbis, sed interdum propriis et prudenter ex cogitatis ab ipso orante; ergo et in orationibus publicis potest uti Ecclesia ab ipsa inventis seu a suis doctoribus desumptis et publica auctoritate approbatis.”—Suarez, *de Hor. Can. ii.*

† These extracts, of which the use dates back to the time of S. Cesarius of Arles, 500, are still cited under the name of the Fathers to whom they were attributed at the epoch when they were inserted in the Breviary. But the authenticity of a certain number of them has become doubtful, and even im-

us most in their homilies is their spiritual meaning and mystical interpretations of the Scriptures. They are not satisfied with hearing the words and understanding them: they desire to penetrate beyond this. Everywhere they see symbols and mysteries; and this, not only in the ceremonies of the ancient worship which God Himself had regulated—which it was necessary to harmonise with the predictions of His prophets and with the religion which He intended to found,\* but even in historical events, where the number and opposition of agents excludes in their regard every possibility of a common design and prophetic intent.† What are we

probable; *v.g.*, Holy Innocents—*Serm. x. de Sanctis* of S. Augustine; Octave of the Ascension, and the day after the Octave—*Serm. clxxvi.* of the same Father; the day of the Dedication—*Serm. cclii.*; the 9th September—*Serm. xviii. de Sanctis*, &c. This defect, however, by no means lessens their value for instruction, exhortation, or as liturgical monuments. (See Note 4 at the end of the volume.)

\* In this respect, in fact, and in what relates to rites and ceremonies, it will, I presume, be readily admitted that the old law was figurative. "If the entire ancient covenant," said, in 1832, a professor of protestant theology much opposed to the mystical sense—"if the existence and organisation of the Jewish people tended to the conservation of theism and to bring the Messiah and His kingdom to us, why, among the institutions and laws given to that people, were there none of a nature to accustom and prepare it for the new ideas which Christ was one day to bring to it?—why, for example, should not the feast of Expiations and the paschal Lamb have prepared their minds more easily to adopt the idea of Redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ?"—Cellerier, *Introduction a la lecture des livres saints*, p. III, c. ii.

† This is what all the Fathers suppose, and what S. Augustine most expressly affirms—"Vetus Testamentum nihil aliud est quam imago novi populi et novi Testamenti".—*De vera Relig.*, cxxvii. "Universus ille apparatus veteris Testamenti in generationibus, factis, dictis, sacrificiis, observationibus, festivitibus, omnibusque eloquiorum præconiis et rebus gestis et rerum figuris paraturiebat Christum venturum."—*Contr. Faust. I.*, xix. cxxxi. "Dico illorum non tantum linguam, verum etiam vitam fuisse propheticam, totumque illud regnum gentis Hebræorum magnum quemdam quia et magni cujusdam, fuisse Prophetam."—*Ibid. I.*, xxii. cxxiv. See, on the subject of biblical allegories, a work recommended by S. Charles and by S. F. de Sales—*Sylva seu Hortus*

to think of these modes of thought? Were they the illusions of an age that was enthusiastic and given to the marvellous? Or have they a real foundation in the inspired text?

No one has ever pretended that these Patristic interpretations are all indisputable or thoroughly established.\*

*allegiarum totius Scripturæ, auctore Hieronymo Cervario Laureto, abbate.* Also : Complete course of Holy Scripture of M. Migne, t. ii. ; Becan, *Analogia veteris Novique Testamenti* ; Huet, *Veteris cum Novo Testamento Parallelismus* ; Acosta, *De Christo in Scripturis revelato* ; in the tables of his Latin Patrology—*Indices allegiarum et figurarum tum Veteris tum Novi Testamenti* (*Indicum*, tom. 1). Also in the 3rd volume of the *Spicilegium Solesmense*, a work of Cardinal Pitra : *De Re Symbolica* ; and particularly the *Clavis* of Meliton—the key or dictionary of symbols. This work, recovered by the learned Benedictine, shows that there was a known and authorised as well as systematic usage in the Church from the beginning, not only of the mystical sense in general, but even in later ages the employment of apparently the most arbitrary interpretations.

\* This reservation applies specially to the details of the best founded interpretations. Under this aspect, too, it is the same with allegories as with parables. The basis of a parable is often clear enough whilst this is by no means the case with its details. For example, in the parable of the Talents, it is certain that the prince who distributes them to his servants and who demands an account of them from each one, represents our Lord, the Master and future Judge of the living and the dead ; and it plainly follows from the recital that He proportions His recompenses according to the merits of His servants. But what is precisely meant by the ten, the five, and the two talents? By this distinction of numbers, does our Lord represent certain gifts in particular, or does he indicate only in a general manner the variety which God has made in the distribution of His graces? We think it possible to have on this point only conjectures more or less probable ; and as it would be presumptuous to wish to absolutely solve these questions, so also would it be folly to diffusely contest such or such interpretation or example proposed by one of the Fathers. The same may be said of the allegories. We are often clear about the subject whilst uncertain as to the circumstances. We know well, for example, that Melchizedec is a figure of Jesus Christ—Supreme Pontiff : *Assimilatus Filio Dei* ; but we do not so clearly see how far the likeness extends, and where the difference begins. We cannot doubt that the Ark of Noe represents the Church, but must we therefore apply to the Church all that is said about the Ark—and if so, in what manner must we interpret it? . . . Eve was the figure of Mary, as Adam was of the Saviour ; but she could only be a partial figure ; in what

Taken singly, each Doctor may be deceived, and, still more, may put forth assertions which are mere opinions, and only probable. But we must allow that, generally speaking, the spiritual explanations of many passages of Scripture which they have given us are founded upon reason—that they are authorised by the example of our Lord and His Apostles, and therefore we cannot without rashness reprove their use or limit their object.

Because the spoken or written word is the usual means of expressing one's thoughts, it is often imagined there is no other. This is an error. There is another language both for God and for us.

Man has gesture which can be fixed by the painter. If it be less precise than speech, it is more rapid and more striking. It is of special use when addressing a multitude we desire to vividly impress it.\* Why, then,

can *the mother of the living* resemble *the mother of believers*? In what does she differ from her? Evidently we must here leave a certain discretion to the interpreter, and must not be surprised if for want of certainty he proposes what is only probable. "Hæc indagamus ut possumus," says S. Augustine, "alius alio majus minusve congruenter verumtamen fideliter: certum tenentes non ea sine aliqua præfiguratione futurorum gesta atque conscripta; neque nisi ad Christum et ejus Ecclesiam esse referenda."—*De Civ. Dei*, I., xvi. ii.; xvii. xv. "Nec respui debet," says S. Gregory the Great, "quidquid sanæ fidei non resistit. Sicut enim ex uno auro alii murenulas alii annulos, alii dextralia ad ornamentum faciunt, ita, ex una sanctæ Scripturæ intelligentia expositores quique per innumeros intellectus quasi varia ornamenta componunt quæ tamen omnia ad decorem cælestis sponsæ proficiunt."—*Epist. lxxvii., lib. iii., ind. 2.*

\* Typical language is not confined to the Prophets, nor exclusively in use among Oriental nations. Examples of it are found among every people and at every period. When Tarquin cut down before his messenger the highest branches in his garden—when Napoleon took with his own hands the imperial crown from the altar of Notre Dame—such acts spoke more than many words to those who witnessed them, and were also better understood. What, then, is peculiar to the sacred writers is not that the facts related by them are significant, but that this signification deals with the future, and that it exists independently of men's ideas; in other words, these facts are veritable prophecies,

should not God have the same or a similar language? In truth, He does possess it, and makes use of it. Whether they accompany His word or supplement it, His outward acts are eminently expressive, and the effects they produce remain under the gaze of successive generations as a testimony of His designs, and at the same time as a record of His greatness.\* Moreover, all creatures, as well as the Scriptures, speak to us of God. To the philosopher as to the believer the universe is a great book in which the Creator has written His thoughts—a vast picture in which He has pencilled a sketch of His perfections—a collection of images and of symbols designed to hide and at the same time to reveal whatever is most secret in His thoughts and in His being.† But this is not all. If God thus spoke in the first of His acts, how could He be mute in those that followed? Why should not the works of Providence be as much expressed by His designs as those of Creation? Why should not each fact as well as each creature have its proper meaning.

Events do not happen by chance, and the liberty we possess is not independence. Our most voluntary movements, our most intimate thoughts, are alike in the hands of the Sovereign Master. That Divine Wisdom knows how to bend our plans to Its views, and without

\* "Aliquando verbis aliquando rebus loquitur; aliquando aliud verbis atque aliud rebus; aliquando autem hoc rebus quod verbis."—S. Greg. Magn., *Hom. in Evang.*, xxi. and xl., 1. "Dum narratur gestum prodit mysterium."—*Moral. in Job.* xxv.; cf. S. Thom., 1<sup>a</sup> q. 1, art. 10. "Utrum S. Scriptura sub una littera habeat plures sensus?"—*Quodlibet* vii., art. xiv., &c.

† "Invisibilia enim ipsius per ea quæ facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur."—*Rom.* i. 20. See *Etudes sur le symbolisme de la nature*, by Monsigneur de la Bouillierie; *Beautés du Culte Catholique*, by the Abbé Raffray, t. 1, c. iv.



any constraint upon our will It makes us serve Its designs as readily as unintelligent Nature itself. God constantly acts through human nature ; He governs the moral as He does the material world. But if He acts, He manifests Himself, and, of necessity, expresses Himself. The history of mankind is, then, like the universe, an animated picture which reflects the perfections of God, and in which His designs are made known and His ideas are realised. Everything therein is the effect, the index, the expression of Infinite Wisdom. Consequently, all is full of teaching, of symbol, and mystery. This being so, why should we be surprised at the explanations of the Fathers, or reject as imaginary their figures and their allegories. In proposing them, what do they intend unless it be to add to the express revelations which God has made by His word, those which He has implied by His acts, or to make us appreciate the scope of the events of which the Holy Ghost, after having been their author and chief agent, has become the historian ?

Now, if we recognise the action of Providence upon human events and, as a consequence, the divine signification of history, ought we to wonder at the constant connection which the Fathers think they see between the facts which they expose and the coming of the Redeemer ? On the contrary, is not this connection a natural one and one of the highest probability, particularly in the history of God's people, when it is a question of the facts recorded by the Holy Ghost for the edification of the Christian Church ? Many reasons warrant us in thinking so.

In the first place, the conduct of God in the natural



order.\* From this point of view, man is the masterpiece of creative power—he is the crown of the world and king of the universe. Accordingly, all that has been done on earth referred to him. A series of sketches or outlines more or less imperfect portray and announce him. When at last he appears on the scene, he finds all is prepared for his reception. This world is like a palace built in his honour and for his use. On every side he beholds proofs of a fatherly care in his regard: he discovers the signs of his own greatness, the emblems of his power, and indications of his high dignity. Why, then, should we suppose the Divine Goodness to have shown less forethought in favour of the Incarnate Word, of the heavenly Man, the second Adam, as the Apostle calls Him.† He came down here below to be the Head of a new people, to found a new empire, raised as much above that of the first man as heaven is above the earth. His coming was not only the term and completion of the works of God in this world, but was in fact to become the means of their being united to their Maker. How,

\* “Cum Deus magna quædam apparatus est, ex multo antea tempore prænuntiat aures præparans ad illa excipienda; ideo non tantum dixerunt prophetæ sed et scripserunt, nec scripserunt tantum sed et per facta figuraverunt.”—S. Chrys., *Hom. i. in cap. Epist. ad Rom.*

† *Rom. v. 14; II. Cor. xv. 45, &c.* “We could scarcely deny the close connection between the two Covenants without destroying all that is harmonious in the works of Providence. Why, then, should we not admit that in Mosaic times Christianity pre-existed as in its germ—that it lived in it, so to say, with a figurative and prophetic existence, and that it pleased God to sketch beforehand and in an imperfect way some touches of this great historic drama that was about to become that of the world itself? Is not this the regular course of Providence even in the physical order, where we see small things precede great things, and the less perfect foreshadows and becomes at last perfection.”—Mgr. Freppel, *Les Peres Apost.*, v. lecture, *L'Esprit et la Lettre*. See Thomassin, *Dogm. theol.*, t. iii., l. v., *de adv. Christ.*, c. vii. and following.

then, can we suppose it was not prepared for, and that visibly, by the care of a most constant and watchful Providence? Why should we not see in the ages that preceded it the marks of solicitude of which the Divine Messenger was the object? Why, in fine, should not His servants have the happiness of discovering amid the events and characters that preceded Him, the preparations for His reign, the foreshadowing of His works, the tokens of His virtues? \* So, in considering the action of God in the world, we should conclude that He has prepared and figured beforehand the coming of His Son; and the same reasoning applies when we study our Lord's mode of acting on earth.

Instead of completing His work in a moment, He has chosen to consecrate a certain time to it, and, like His Father, give us the example of progress in goodness.

\* It is thus, according to S. Augustine, that the Old Testament entirely relates to the Saviour. "Omnia quæ illis continentur libris vel de ipso dicta sunt, vel propter ipsum."—*Contr. Faust. I., xii., c. vii.* In certain passages He is positively described: these are the figures and predictions concerning Him—"Ibi spectatur imago ubi Imperator præsens non est, Imagines ergo præferebantur antequam veniret Imperator noster Dominus Jesus Christus. Imaginibus sublatis fulget præsentia Imperatoris." In other places the relation is less direct, but not the less real. If the Holy Ghost does not speak of the Messiah, He nevertheless continues to think of Him and to prepare for His coming. "Non omnia quæ gesta narrantur, aliquid significare putanda sunt: sed propter illa quæ aliquid significant etiam ea quæ nihil significant attexuntur."—S. Aug., *de Civ. Dei I., xvi., c. ii.* Thus, in the construction of a palace and in the distribution of its different parts, the skilful architect always directs his thoughts on the prince who is to inhabit it. Everything is referred to the utility, convenience, and safety of his person, to the requirements of his rank, and to the necessities and proper order of his household. And though the prince does not reside in every part of this great edifice, everything nevertheless belongs to him and is designed for him, nothing in its structure is allowed but on his account, and without him nothing would have a part in it.—*Lettres d'un Prieur pour la defense des regles pour l'interpretation des Ecritures, 1729.*

Whatever He has proposed to establish in a permanent manner, He has taken care to announce it by some figure. He shows the image before producing the reality, and He seems to rise but gradually and by various attempts to the perfection of His ideal. So, before He offers Himself on Calvary, He had already offered Himself as a victim in the Temple of Jerusalem. Previous to the institution of the Eucharist, He had already changed water into wine at Cana, and multiplied the loaves in the desert. Before they received from Him power to remit sins and thus give to souls the freedom of the children of God, the Apostles were sent to cure the sick and drive out devils. Before Peter was placed at the Head of the Church and had established at Rome the seat of an infallible and never-failing Authority, he had proclaimed, in the name of all, the divinity of Christ—had walked upon the waters in His steps, and steered the bark whence Truth Itself taught men. In all these circumstances our Lord acted with foresight of the future. *In parabolam temporis instantis.\** He followed the way His Father had prepared for Him, and was thus like a sculptor, who begins by sketching upon some common material the masterpiece which he proposes to realise in marble or bronze.

Another fact not less remarkable is the care which the Divine Master has taken in the Gospel to show forth under the form of parables or allegories the principal points of His doctrine and everything that was to become a rule of faith or conduct to His disciples. We may call to mind as examples the story of the labourers in the vineyard, that of the guests invited to the banquet, the

\* *Heb. ix. 9, xi. 19.*

ten virgins, the grain of mustard seed, the lost sheep, and others. Have not all of these stories a clear meaning, often referring to the future? Do they not show on the part of Jesus Christ a sustained design to give a sensible and symbolical expression to the belief of His Church.\*

But if this was the method followed by our Lord in this world, must we not believe that such was equally and from the beginning the design and plan of His Father? And, since God needs no effort to make real His Parables, seeing that He disposes of men and of events with more ease than we do of words and characters, can we doubt that He made use of this power at least in the facts which He has taken care to record for us Himself by the hands of inspired writers?†

Still more, we must acknowledge that the life of our Saviour is a continuous allegory on the destiny of the Church, and consequently that there are not fewer symbols and mystic significations in the Gospel narrative than can be found in the most mysterious passages of the Old Testament. Everyone knows that our Lord is the type of all the predestinate, that all His mysteries ought to be reproduced spiritually in each of us—that we must, like Him, carry our cross, be immolated, buried, rise again, and ascend into heaven! Is there anything more expressly or more frequently repeated in the writ-

\* "Omnia ista innuunt aliquid; indicare volunt aliquid; intentos nos faciunt, ut pulsemus hortantur."—S. Aug., *Tract. xv. in Joan.* "Si nec folium de arbore sine causa, nec unus ex passeribus sine Patri cælesti cadet super terram putem ego de ore sancti evangelistæ superfluum diffuere verbum præsertim in historia Verbi? Non puto. Plena quippe sunt omnia supernis mysteriis ac cælesti singula dulcedine redundantia; si tamen diligentem habeant inspectorem qui noveret mel sugere de petra."—S. Bern., *Hom. I. supra Missus est.*

† "Sicut humana consuetudo verbis ita divina potentia factis loquitur."—S. Aug., *Ep. xlix.*

ings of S. Paul and the other Apostles? On the other hand, who is there that cannot recognise in all the miracles He worked—in those cures of the blind and paralytic, in the raising up of the dead, in the deliverance of the possessed, in the calming of the tempest—the image of the effect of graces which He was soon to bestow upon souls? \* Therefore, these two facts suffice to put beyond doubt the figures of the Law, and to justify every spiritual interpretation of our holy Doctors. †

If, then, the multiplication of the loaves announced the Eucharist, why should not the manna also have foreshadowed it? If the miraculous draught of fishes typi-

\* “Interrogemus ipsa miracula, habent enim si intelligantur linguam suam. Nam, factum etiam Verbi verbum nobis est.”—S. Aug., *xxiv. in Joan. Dom. iv. Quadr.* “Et opera et verba sunt opera quia facta sunt, verba quia signa sunt.”—*xliv. in Joan. Fer. iv. hebdom. iv. Quadr.* “Quotidie aperiuntur oculi cæcorum,” &c.—*In Psalm cxxxiv. Item, S. Greg. M., Hom. Dom. Quing. I. viii.*

† In the *Miscellanies* of Cardinal Wiseman may be seen a lengthened and very interesting work upon the parables and miracles of the New Testament. The learned author shows that the parables and the miracles of our Lord would suffice to fully establish the chief points of His doctrine and morals. “The parables,” says the Cardinal, “contain the germ of all the dogmas of Christianity, such as the History of Israel and of Juda, of Christ and of His erign, as found in the Prophets. . . . And,” he remarks, “there is an evident analogy between a parable proposed in words and one put in action. . . . Is not a miracle, which, independently of its immediate and palpable object, includes a lesson destined to fructify in the sequel, in every way a true parable—an allegory more striking than the symbolic actions of Osee and Ezechiel?” Compare, for example, the parable of the barren tree (*Luc. xiii. 6*) with the miracle of the cursed fig-tree (*Matt. xxi. 18*). Add, further, our Lord has clearly indicated the meaning of many of His miracles. Thus, after having multiplied the loaves in the desert, He declares that He is the living Bread, and desires to be the nourishment of our souls (*Joan. vi.*). After restoring his sight to the man who was born blind, He proclaims Himself to be the light of the world (*Id. ix.*). And after calling Himself the resurrection and the life, He calls forth Lazarus from the tomb (*Id. xi.*), &c. “Talia sunt omnia, sed oculos quærun.”—S. Aug., *de Ord. I. ii.*



fied the conversion of the Gentiles, why may we not see in the Exodus from Egypt a figure of the redemption of the world and the setting free of the human race? If the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the pledge and model of ours, why should not Jonas, coming forth after having been three days in the whale's belly, be also the model and providential promise of the resurrection of our Saviour?

It is clear, then, that far from being strange and contrary to rule, the method followed by the Fathers is founded upon analogies, and presents the most striking likelihood. We may add that it is calculated to give us a high esteem for the sacred books, and to fix their doctrine in the minds of the faithful, and to win from all respect and submission.

Undoubtedly, if we only regard the letter, the inspired word would merit our constant veneration; still, it would be less rich, less fruitful, less sublime. Yet, for ourselves, we confess it would not ravish so much our heart and soul. We love to hear God speak, in condescension for our weakness, in our own tongue: but we love also to hear Him speak as God, and use our human language in a superhuman manner.\*

When we are shown in the whole Scripture two orders of truths stated at the same time in the same expressions; when everywhere the pictures they trace for us offer us the images of the future joined to the recollections of the past; when it shows us the events of every age guided by one and the same hand, and marching towards the same goal and converging to the same

\* "Numquam sic locutus est homo sicut homo ille" was observed by those who had listened to the words of our Saviour.—*Joan. vii. 46.*



centre, it becomes in our eyes clothed with a new character—still more august and more holy.\*

As a holy Doctor remarks, the two Covenants, when brought together, render each other more clear and complete. They resemble the two cherubim of the Ark, made both on the same pattern, and both alike turned towards the Propitiatory ; or those angelic choirs heard by Isaias, calling upon and answering each other without ceasing, on each side of the throne of God.† The first intones the divine chant, the second takes it up more distinctly, and both utter a single word that includes the whole : *Utriusque canticum Christus*.‡ By this single word every difficulty is solved, the most strange facts are explained and harmonised. The world no longer appears a confused medley of blind passions, unforeseen results, and abortive designs. The Man-God appears at the head of history, in the place and with the attributes

\* “ Quid hac historia vel illustrius inveniri potest quæ universum orbem tanto apice auctoritatis obtinuit, vel fidelius in qua ita narrantur præterita ut futura etiam prædicentur quorum multa videmus impleta ex quibus ea quæ restant sine dubio speramus implenda.”—S. Aug., *de Civ. Dei*, I. xvi., c. ii. “ Hoc ad dignitatem divinæ Scripturæ pertinet ut sub una littera multos sensus contineat.”—S. Thom., *Op. de potent.*, q. 1, a. 1. “ Et alioquin omnia quæ ostenduntur per aliquod velamentum majorem et augustiorem exhibent veritatem sicut fructus qui in aqua pellucet et formæ quæ per tegumenta concedunt aliquam sui evidentiam.”—Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, I. v., c. ix.

† “ Nonne tamquam duo Seraphim clamant ad invicem concinentiam laudis Altissimo : *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth*, ita duo testamenta fideliter concordantia sacratam concinunt veritatem Deo?”—*Ep. ad Januarium*. “ Illæ sunt duæ tibix quasi diverse sonantes, sed idem spiritus ambas inflat.”—*Ibid.* “ Tamquam si nomen Domini et auro et atramento scribatur.”—*Hom. xxvii.*

‡ “ Both Testaments refer to Jesus Christ : the Old as its expectation, the New as its model : both regard Him as their Centre.”—Pascal, *Pensées Des Figures*.

His Greatness requires.\* On all sides He spreads out His presence and His action. He rules all things, directs and animates all things; like the sun which by his brightness assimilates the light of the wandering stars, vivifies them by his heat, and bears them away in his unerring course.

S. Gregory the Great, placing himself at our standpoint and using this method, sees in the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem a figure of His passage through all ages; and he admires the place which God has given to His Son in the history of the world (Marc. xi. 9). When He went up to the Holy City, says the Evangelist, a crowd of people went before, another followed Him, both singing His praises and blessing with an equal ardour His coming. *Et qui præibant et qui sequebantur clamabant Hosanna !†* Was it not thus, continues the holy doctor, that the Man-God passed through the world and is now gone to take possession of His glory in the abiding City? The multitude of saints form for Him a twofold retinue. The elect of the Ancient people lead the way, and are first seen, those of the Christian people close the procession. He takes His place between them both as the Mediator and only

\* "It may be all very well to mount up to antiquity and descend again to modern ages—yet nothing will be seen like the character of the Scriptures, nothing comparable to the majesty of Jesus Christ."—Lacordaire, *11<sup>e</sup> Lett. sur la piete*. "The Catholic Church alone fills all ages. The Law comes before the Gospel. To be looked for, to come, to be acknowledged by a posterity that shall last with the world, such is the character of the Messiah in whom we believe. Jesus Christ is to-day, He was yesterday, and will be through endless ages."—Bossuet, *Disc. sur l'Hist. univ.*, p. 11, c. xxxi.

† "Hosanna salva nos dicitur. Ab ipso enim salutem et priores quæsierient et præsentem quærunt; quoniam una spes est et una fides præcedentium et sequentium populorum."—S. Greg., *in Ezech. i. 11. Hom. v. 2.*

Saviour; whilst all proclaim His coming, and singing with one voice Hosanna, confess His greatness and adhere to Him by the bonds of Faith, of Hope, and of Love. Thus, in attempting to unveil the mysteries of Scripture, far from exposing it to contempt, our holy doctors have charmed the most exalted minds; whilst at the same time they enlighten the simple people, they please the most prejudiced.

As we have already remarked, most men stand in need of sensible signs in order to apply their minds to the study of heavenly truths. That which does not strike the senses or the imagination, will never make a lively impression upon the intellect. This is why our Lord made Himself visible to us.\* For this reason, after becoming incarnate in our nature, He chose in a manner to make visible also His doctrine, His maxims, and His virtues in His mysteries and in His saints, and would have them seen in outward and striking facts. But why should it be thought that the Divine wisdom had not done for the people of old what the Divine Master was to do in favour of His disciples? Could there have been a more effectual method to cause that carnal nation to hear and understand the predictions of the prophets than placing before these people an image, figure, or sketch of their fulfilment?† The figurative element, mingled with the history of the patriarchs, must have in result caused their posterity to have been more careful to preserve the remembrance of these predictions, at the same

\* "Ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur."—*Præf. Miss. Epiph.*

† "Umbra futurorum."—*Coloss. ii. 17.* "Exemplaria verorum."—*Heb. ix. 24.*

time that the events of their own lives fixed in their minds those prophetic indications of which the sense was lost to the multitude. Thus it was expedient that God should follow this method for the instruction of His people, and the Doctors of the Church could not neglect the advantage it gave them whilst teaching religion and strengthening the faith of their Christian flocks.\* At the same time that by these means they strengthen the faith of Christians, they win thereby the esteem and the respect of unbelievers.

Antiquity has ever a venerable and holy aspect ; we naturally respect what we find respected, and what we find to be in possession of an immemorial authority. It was desirable, then, that Christianity should not be wanting in this respect, and we must therefore not be surprised that its doctors have traced back as far as possible its primary origin. What could be better calculated to disarm the Pagans and calm the Jews than to show both, that in this religion, which they denounced as a novelty,

\* On this point some excellent observations may be found in an apologetic tract of Nicoli upon the advantages and foundation of spiritual interpretations. They are found in the beginning of the *Tracté de Hamon*, entitled *Tableau des qualités et des devoirs des pasteurs, dans ce qui est dit par le sage de la femme forte*. But we must not confound the moral conclusions, edifying applications, and pious reflections inspired by the Revealed Word to the holy doctors with the spiritual significations properly so called. Words are not only the expressions of ideas, they are often the revelation of a soul, they bear the stamp of their author—his intentions may be recognised in them. They bring with them a light so much the more clear as they proceed from a more instructed and more sublime intelligence. Therefore in one of God's words, were it but a single one, there are infinite observations that may be made upon it, and infinite profit to be drawn from it. *Cor Dei in verbis Dei*, says S. Gregory the Great. That something only conjectural should find its way into these studies, that every deduction from them should not prove rigorously exact, it matters but little. The object ceases not to be divine nor the result advantageous.—Cf. S. Aug., *de Doctr. Christ.*, I. i., c. xxi.

there was to be found an institution as old as the world ; and to convince them that the Crucified One whom they reproached as the destroyer of the law and the prophets had not only been predicted but also pre-figured by David, by Moses, by Abraham, and by Noe ; in short, by all those whom for so many centuries, and in even the most distant countries, they had been accustomed to hold in veneration.\* And let it not be said that these figures can be disputed, and that proofs which are doubtful shake rather than confirm the truth. For we will reply that a certain number, attested by the Holy Ghost, or otherwise founded upon irresistible evidence, cannot be called in question ; † and that even those that present fewer characters of certitude merit consideration, and possess considerable value in the opinion of the wise. Have the Courts ever held the axiom that evidence not absolutely certain is to be looked on as of no value ? Far

\* Thus, for example, the apologists as well as the preachers of the first ages dwell much upon this consideration. They insist the more readily upon the symbolical history of Christianity for the reason that its real history had but scarcely begun. *O Christum et in novis veterum !* exclaimed Tertullian (*Contr. Marcion, I. iv., c. xxi*). In another passage he calls it the Illuminator of Antiquity (Boss., *Serm. ii., sur la visitation*). The primitive monuments of Christian art, such as we find in the Catacombs, equally attest the importance which the prophetic figures of the Old Testament possessed in the eyes of the first Christians, with the attraction that drew them to ascend thus to the first rudiments of their faith. See Martigny, *Dict. d'antiq. Chritienne*, 4to, 1865 —Article, *Figures*.

† V.g. Galat. iv. 24. *Quæ sunt per allegoriam dicta* (1 Cor. x., vi. 11). *Hæc autem in figura facta sunt nostri* (Heb. ix. 9). *Quæ parabola est temporis instantis*, &c. The law, said St. Paul, had but shadows, *umbra habens lex futurorum bonorum*, but they were true shadows (Heb. x. 1). As objects illumined by the first rays of the sun cast the shadows at length that go before and portray them, so under the rays of the eternal Sun, Jesus Christ and His Church threw out beforehand, in the history of the chosen people, an image of themselves which announced their approach and foreshadowed their grandeur. See *Regles pour l'intelligence des Ecritures*, by Duguet and Asfeld, 18mo.



from this, their rule is to take account of everything, to confront every deposition, to collect the smallest indications, to join together all the probabilities, and then to pronounce upon the whole case. Often no single proof in particular would procure a conviction, but when all the probabilities are gathered together the result is equivalent to demonstration. So ought it to be in this matter. Taken separately, these allegories, these allusions, these figures, might leave the mind in suspense; but put together, reunited, explained, and commented on by so many judicious and disinterested parties, they possess the greatest weight,\* and it would be rash to treat them without distinction as mere reveries and fancies.† Now, if we must draw from these considerations a general rule, we will not go so far as to lay down that there should necessarily be allegories and figures in our sacred books, that religious history is necessarily body and soul, spirit and flesh, like humanity,‡ or that the nature of God and the wants of man require it; but we will confidently state that this kind of language, this manner of revelation, perfectly harmonises with our ideas respecting the one and the other,—that instead of being surprised that the Holy Ghost should have made use of it, we should have rather wondered not to find traces of it in our sacred writings. We may add that, far from

\* “Nullam in eis periculum nosciæ doctrinæ esse potest. Quod autem non singula verba vel sententiæ illorum sint infallibilia et canonicæ non obstat quia non proponuntur ut omnia ita credantur, sed ut illuminent et instruant Ecclesiam et populum modi humani.”—Suarez, *de Hor. Can. ii., No. 22.*

† “Ita conjungunt incontestatione Christi voces suas ut cujus vis obtusi surditas erubescat.”—S. Aug., *Contr. Faust., l. xii., c. vii.*

‡ “Sicut Verbum Dei genitum habet naturam divinam invisibilem, et humanam visibilem, ita verbum Dei scriptum habet sensum externum et internum.”—Origen., *de Princip., l. iv.* Item, S. Cyrill. Alex., *de Lev., l. i.*



leading us astray, the holy doctors by the application of their principles have rendered us an inestimable service by revealing to us the precious treasures of the Scriptures, by giving us the key to its mysteries, and by teaching us to raise the veil, the existence of which we had not suspected or had believed to be impenetrable.\*

Such, truly, is the idea of the Church. Not only have the spiritual interpretations of the fathers not deterred Her from proposing them to us as masters, in requiring us to read, almost daily, their writings during the Divine Office immediately after those of the inspired writers; but we may further remark that She has preferred to select Her lessons from those passages of their works in which they reveal to us the most sublime and hidden meanings. How, indeed, could She feel otherwise when She herself, taught by the Holy Ghost, who dictated the Scriptures, loves so much to employ signs and figures in Her teachings and exhortations? †

\* How edified are we daily, says Bossuet, when we discover in the Holy Scriptures so many proofs of God's presence. These, so to say, inartificial proofs which appear without art, and which result without reflection upon the conjunction of things, produce the most wonderful effects. We see in them the finger of God; we adore in them the profound wisdom of His providence; by them we become strengthened in the faith of His promises: they exhibit in the Scriptures inexhaustible riches; they give us some idea of the infinity of God, and of that adorable essence that can discover in an infinite mode and without ceasing new things to intelligent beings. This reflection affords us a consolation in our pilgrimage. It is needless to add that this book is but a series of symbols or of predictions expressed in an emblematic manner, as is the case in those of the old prophets. (*Preface de l'Apocalypse.*)

† In the Ritual, as also in the Pontifical, particularly in the ceremonies of Ordination, may be seen with what skill the Church uses the language of symbols, and what importance She attaches to the right understanding of them by Her ministers. But, further, She frequently attaches a mystical and spiritual signification to the biblical facts She lays before us. Thus, on the feast of S. Monica, She requires the narrative of the raising up of the son of the widow of

Speaking, as She does incessantly by Her ceremonies, through Her places of worship, and by all Her ritual, often communicating with the multitude only by this universal language of sign and symbol, it is but natural to Her to find that God has spoken in the same way to men,—first of all in the great temple of the universe, then from the still more Divine Sanctuary of the inspired Book. Does She not rejoice, then, to see that Her doctors have received sufficient intelligence to understand this language and words adapted to reveal its mysteries? \* Such is equally the idea of the saints. For the most of them Scripture is Thabor. Moses and Elias show themselves there unveiled; the Law and the Prophets speak of Calvary; and what is given there to be seen and heard leaves no other impression upon the soul than that of the Man-God, no thought but that of His sovereign grandeur and incomparable brightness.†

Naim to be read as a figure of the resurrection of sinners, whom at the solicitation of their Mother the Church, Jesus Christ restores to the life of grace. On the Assumption She reads the Gospel of Martha and Mary, because She sees in Martha a figure of the Church militant, which has received the Saviour into her house, but is obliged to quit Him to go about her laborious duties; and in Mary the figure of the Church triumphant, and especially of Mary, who is Her queen, and who, reunited to her Saviour never more to leave Him, possesses in Him the better part—the joy and repose of heaven. In the office for the dedication of a church Zaccheus' hospitality to our Lord, and the reward he receives, are presented to us as an index of the blessings His sojourn among us brings with it. Lastly, on Corpus Christi She recalls the words of our Saviour about the manna of the desert and the sacrifices of the Old Law, and She sings the words of the Angelic Doctor—*In figuris præsignatur: cum Isaac immolatur, Agnus paschæ deportatur, Datur manna patribus.*

Annuntiaverunt opera Dei et facta ejus intellexerunt,—a “versicle” frequently repeated in the Divine Office.

† “Duxit illos in montem excelsum seorsum et transfiguratus est ante illos. Et ecce apparuerunt illis Moyses et Elias cum eo loquentes, Respondens autem Petrus dixit: Si vis faciamus hic tria tabernacula—Levantes autem oculos suos

Those only, then, can feel contempt for or astonishment at such language who have not the Christian idea, who consider our inspired books as ordinary literary works, composed in the same way as those of profane authors, written like them obscurely, and therefore to be submitted to the same rules of interpretation. Well instructed probably in human science, these men are all the more blind as regards things Divine. When they protest against the sentiments of the Church, when they shut their ears to the explanations of Her doctors and saints, they may be compared to children who consider everything incredible which they have not seen or do not understand; or to those men who, devoted to numerical calculations and the handling of worldly affairs, regard as a dreamer the man of the most solid judgments, because he pretends to pronounce, from some few words, upon the genius of an orator, or, he thinks to seize in a few lines of a statesman, in an allusion, in a word, the secret of the future, with its whole plot cunningly devised and artfully dissembled.

neminem viderunt nisi solum Jesum."—*Matt. xvii. 1.* "Erras Petre, et sicut alius Evangelistæ testatur nescis quod dicis. Noli tabernacula quærere cum meum sit tabernaculum Evangelii in quo Lex et Prophetæ recapitulandæ sunt."—S. Hyron., in *Matt. c. xvii.*

## CHAPTER IV.

### LEGENDS OR LIVES OF THE SAINTS.\*

THE extracts from the Fathers in the second Nocturn are scarcely ever read, except on Sundays and the chief solemnities. On the Saints' days they are usually replaced by a short account of their life.† To understand these legends, and to perfectly enter into the spirit of each Office, it would be useful to have previously studied these Lives in some more lengthened history. In this way we should take in a vast number of allusions which otherwise would pass unperceived, and we should also understand without difficulty terms but little used, and upon which ordinarily the mind dwells with uncertainty—proper names, for example, whether of place or nation.‡

\* “Legend, Life of the Saint whose feast is being celebrated. This life or narrative was formerly so-called because the monks were obliged to read it at matins or in the refectory.”—*Legenda erat.*

† Sometimes, nevertheless, in the case of the earlier saints, instead of a recital of their lives an extract from their panegyric by some Father is read. Thus, for the Machabees was read S. Gregory Nazianzen; for S. Joachim, S. John Damascus; for S. Joseph, S. Bernard; for the nativity of S. John the Baptist, S. Augustine; S. Leo, for the Apostles Peter and Paul, and for S. Lawrence, deacon; S. Jerome, for S. John at the Latin Gate, for S. Mark, for S. Lucy, and for S. Ignatius; S. Gregory the Great for S. Mary Magdalene; S. Ambrose for S. Agnes, &c.

‡ Upon this point may be consulted the *Catalogue Sanctorum ac Sanctarum, etc., auctore Simone de Peyronnet; Tolosæ, 1706, 4to.*

Omissions would then be supplied by each one's memory. Again, the conclusions to be drawn from certain facts, the solution of difficulties they may have raised, and the right manner of justifying certain assertions, would offer themselves spontaneously. Were the Office what is called 'the Common,' the knowledge we have of the Saint would enable us to apply in a special manner to him a number of passages that would strike us by their appropriateness. Our prayers to him would become more expressive. More interest would be felt in it, and its divers part would be more relished.\*

But it is especially necessary to understand the legend in the case of an Office entirely 'proper,' as that of S. Martin for example, of S. Laurence, S. Clement, S. Agnes, S. Agatha, S. Cecily, S. Lucius, &c. Without this knowledge there would be many details which we should only half understand; the responsories, versicles, antiphons would seem incomplete and wanting in precision; they would excite wonder rather than nourish piety. On the contrary, for the one who has before his mind the whole history of the Saint, every fact relating to him touches and moves the heart. Each word recalls a virtue, a trial, a triumph. He becomes an eye-witness, as it were, of the scene. He profits by the teaching of the holy Pontiff; he applauds the courage of the Levite; the courage and intrepidity of some Virgin is a subject of admiration to him—he seems to hear the threats of the persecutors and the replies of the Martyrs.

In this way the mind is instructed and the soul edified.†

\* See Note V. at the end of the Book.

† Such are the fruits which the lives of the saints naturally produce. "Si enim vestis exigua particula, vel modicus resoluti corporis pulvis de sanctorum memoriis comparatus, ineffabile fidelibus patrocinium creditur, quis digne



We will add but one observation upon the subject of Hagiographists: it is this, we must carefully choose among them, and not seek the traditions of the Church at the hands of those who have taken credit to themselves for having gone against Her sentiments, and who pretend to reform, according to their own ideas, Her history and worship. It is necessary to be mistrustful of these prejudiced minds which, under the pretext of prudence and a wise criticism, tax with indiscretion every practice beyond their notion of things, dispute every fact that does not fit in with their system, and, excepting those miracles which are of absolute faith, would regard all others as but false legends and mere fancies.

At a period not very remote it was thought to be a mark of cleverness not to trust too much the sentiments of the Church in matters relating to Her history and that of Her saints. It was esteemed a merit to find Her judgment at fault; and even among Her ministers might be found some who were eager to confess Her mistakes whilst asking forgiveness for the

vel explicare vel cogitare valeat eorum vita virtutesque quantam salutis materiam conferant devotis mentibus cum replicantur? Inde namque fides firmatur, pietas nutritur, mundi contemptus pascitur, desiderium supernorum generatur".—Paschas Ratbert., *in pass. SS. Rufini et Valerici, Præf.* Accordingly they have at all times been the reading by predilection of fervent souls. Among those who have testified the greatest esteem for them may be cited S. Gregory the Great, S. Gregory of Tours, Venerable Bede, S. Boniface, Archbishop of Mayence, who made collections of them even in the remotest part of England; S. Sigiran, Apostle of Germany, who always took them with him in his pastoral journeys; S. Ceran, Bishop of Paris; S. Francis of Assisium, S. Stephen of Grammont, S. Thomas, S. Anthony, S. Philip Neri: this last, desiring to have something read to him shortly before his death, chose the life of S. Bernardin of Sienna; afterwards he began his Office with his brethren, and shortly after rendered up his soul to God. See Dom. Pitra., *Etudes sur les collections des actes des saints*, 8vo, 1850.



sake of Her good intentions. "Following the Jansenists," said Mgr. Darboy, "some Gallicans revised history according to a preconceived system; and it will scarcely be believed what a mass of errors these views accumulated under the pen of ecclesiastical writers. All has not yet been said upon the erroneous assertions and grievously partial statements of Fleury, Baillet, Tillemont, and Launoy. It would cause great surprise were we to produce the long list of causes that have been unworthily decided, and of processes that still await revision." \*

We are far from assuming that any particular fact, or reputed fact, should be withdrawn from discussion merely because it is found mentioned in the liturgical books. Such is not the intention of the Church. Far from straining consciences upon this subject, She acknowledges that Her infallibility does not extend to these matters,† and the repeated changes She has made in the Martyrology and Office prove that She has not a blind faith in everything they contain.‡ What is

\* *Œuvres de S. Denys*, Introduct., p. 80, 8vo, 1843. Upon this point may be usefully consulted—*Les reflexions sur les regles et sur l'usage de la critique touchant l'histoire de l'Eglise*, &c., du P. Honoré de Sainte-Marie, 3 vols., 4to, 1713-1717, Paris; particularly the II. part, and in the III., Book i., Dissert. ii., § 3, &c. *Acta S. Martyrum vindicatæ*, de Laderchi, 2 vols., 4to, 1723, &c.

† *Judicium Dei veritati semper innititur; judicium autem Ecclesiæ nonnunquam opinionem sequitur, quam et fallere sæpe contingit et falli.*—*In Cap. xxx. viii. et nobis. Decretal. xxxix., de Sent. Excom.*

‡ The Holy See has on many occasions directed an examination and correction of the Roman Martyrology. The result of these investigations was published under Gregory XIII. in 1584, under Urban VIII. in 1630, under Clement X. in 1675, under Benedict XIV. in 1749. This last Pontiff does not hesitate to say—"Omnia quæ in martyrologium inserta sunt inconcussæ veritatis non sunt, ut ex repetitis illius correctionibus constat".—*De Canon, SS. I. iv., p. 11, c. xvii., No. 9.* With regard to the Breviary, its legends have been equally reviewed and carefully corrected, first of all in 1568, by order of

essential in the opinion of the Church, and what She guarantees in respect of Her saints, is their sanctity and their glorification in heaven. As to their acts She limits Herself to choosing from among the existing accounts such as are most authentic and edifying ; and as to the account of them, which She adopts, She requires it to be read, not as an object of faith, but for example and pious improvement. We are free, therefore, to apply the rules of criticism to these histories—and there is nothing to prevent, if there be grounds for it, our discussing that which is certain from what may be doubtful or contrary to rigorous accuracy.

Benedict XIV. formally maintains this freedom ; he makes use of it in many instances. Still, he takes occasion to remark upon the modesty and reserve which should accompany its exercise. It cannot, in fact, be denied that the histories used by the Church acquire thereby much authority, and merit a great respect. If not written by the Holy Ghost, nor collected by an infallible guide, they have been chosen by competent persons—men enlightened, impartial, and careful even to scrupulosity, and anxious solely to guard against

Pius V. ; then in 1602, under Clement VIII., with the co-operation of Cardinals Baronius and Bellarmine ; lastly, under Urban VIII., in 1631, as is attested by the bulls of these three Popes, as may be seen at the beginning of the Breviary. "Attamen velitum existimari non potest," says Benedict XIV. in the same work, "debitâ cum reverentiâ et gravé fundamento, quæ occurrunt in factis historicis difficultates exponere easque judicio sedis apostolicæ supponere, si quandi manus iterum admonéatur ad Breviarii Romani correctionem" (L. iv., p. 11, c. xiii., No. 8 ; and c. xvii., No. 9). He had even consented that a commission should enquire into the modifications which might be adopted in a new edition of the Roman Breviary. The results of the labours of this commission reserved in the Corsini Library were communicated in 1856 by order of Pius IX. to Mon. Roskovany, who has published them in the fifth volume of his collection.—*Cælibatus et Breviarium*.

every appearance of rashness. This choice has been generally made at a time and under conditions most favourable for the vindication of truth; and has been controlled, even as to the smallest details, by repeated close examinations, and by the judgment of the learned, to whose approval it is necessarily submitted. There is therefore every presumption in its favour, and, generally speaking, we cannot use too much circumspection and reserve in censuring it. *Unusquisque memor sit conditionis suæ.\**

Experience supports these presumptions. At every period, certain minds have pretended to find inaccuracies and even manifest errors in these legends. But, it usually proved that they had allowed themselves to be deceived by prejudices and false appearances. Further investigation would have cleared up their difficulties, and, though perhaps with some hesitation, they would have been obliged to admit, that what seemed erroneous or fabulous was in truth the most probable and best founded of the facts which history has bequeathed to us.† What most provoked the criticisms and prejudices of the last century were the miracles, supernatural gifts, visions, prophecies,

\* *Pontificale. In ordin. presb.* A student of the University of Paris having, at the Sorbonne, advanced the proposition in 1484, *that we are no more required to believe the legends of the Saints than the chronicles of the Gauls*, it was submitted to the Faculty of Theology and solemnly condemned by it, June 5, 1486, with this qualification—*Falsa est piarum aurium offensiva auctoritati Ecclesiæ derogans; et si intelligatur universaliter est hæretica. Ideo revocanda* (Duplessis D'Argentré, *Collectio judiciorum*, t. 1. p. 2). In 1548 the University censured not less severely an edition of the Roman Breviary made for the diocese of Orleans, in which were suppressed a certain number of miraculous deeds and sundry "lessons" of the Saints. *Videtur ista mutatio imprudens, temeraria, et scandalosa, neque carens suspitione favendi hæreticis.*—*Ibid.*, t. 11, p. 160. 1st March.

† See Note VI. at the end.

and heroic and singular deeds of the Saints. Without weighing too much the proofs of these, it was the fashion to say that the wonderful is not essential to piety, that so many prodigies in the lives of the saints shock our notion of the probable; and that after all, what is most important to remark in them, is that which we are called upon to imitate, their ordinary practices and common virtues.\* Now we must guard ourselves against these notions, if we desire to recite the Office with relish and fruit, as the Church desires we should.

Undoubtedly, miracles are not necessary for our salvation, that is to say, in order that we may profit by God's grace and attain to bliss; but to accomplish the great works that He reserves for His chosen friends, to be authoritatively placed in the rank of the saints—to justify the worship the Church gives to the beatified, may we not say they are indispensable in the actual order of Providence? Was it not after this manner that our Lord revealed Himself to the world? Has He not promised that those who are faithful to Him should, like Himself, work wonders as a proof of their belief and their virtue?† Moreover, is there any life of a saint that contains more numerous or more extraordinary miracles than those we read of in the Acts of the Apostles? And what more natural than to see the Church sustain Herself by the same means that served to found Her, and to find in all the great works of Christianity, in the forma-

\* Cf. De la Tour, *Memoires, Du culte des Saints*; and Baillet, *Tableau critique*, . . . 1st Jan., on S. Clair; 2nd Jan., on S. Adelaide; 4th Jan., on S. Régoberth; 6th Jan., on S. Melanie, &c.

† Signa autem eos qui crediderent hæc sequenter; linguis loquentur novis, serpentes tollent, et si mortiferum quid biberint non eis nocebit: super ægros manus imponent et bene habebunt."—*Marc. xv. 17*.

tion of religious societies in particular, the image of its miraculous origin ? \*

Certainly extraordinary gifts and heroic acts are objects rather of admiration than of imitation. But every one can perceive how close is the tie that unites these two things. What more natural than to imitate those whom we venerate ! And does not the ardour we feel for virtue increase in proportion to the admiration she inspires ? Besides, is it not an error to reduce the worship of the saints to a mere study of their virtues, and the fruit it ought to bear to an imitation of their examples ? Does not the Church propose to Herself, before all things, the glory of the Sovereign Master in the homage She pays to His servants ? And has She a better means of glorifying Him than by making known the treasures with which He has enriched them, and the wonders He has worked by their ministry ? † Has She not an interest in making known the wealth and greatness of the graces that God pours into Her bosom ? If these extraordinary favours prove the virtue of the saints, and the love of which they are the object, they likewise give testimony to the purity of their belief, and therefore of the Church whose disciples they were. ‡

Thus we should do wrong to distrust the miraculous

\* Cf. Muzzarelli, " Du nombre et de la qualité des Miracles et du bon usage de la logique ".

† " There are some lives of the Saints in which are found more subjects for admiration than imitation, such as that of S. Mary of Egypt, the two Saints, Catherine of Sienna and Genoa of S. Angela, and such like, who nevertheless assuredly give us in general a great taste for the holy love of God."—S. Franc. De Sales, *Introduction à la vie devote*.

‡ Cf. S. Franc. de Sales, *Controverses Disc.*, lii., &c. ; Bellarmine, *Concio de gloria miraculorum et de dono prophetiæ* ; S. Therese, *Chateau de l'ame*.



acts which we read of on the Feast days of the Saints, or to think it would be better to pass them over in silence. Histories of this kind, said the learned Thomassin,\* are not of faith, but wise and enlightened minds will not reject them on that account. The writings of SS. Jerome, Basil, Cyprian, Augustine, Ambrose and Athanasius, leave no doubt that the Fathers readily admitted facts of this kind. S. Augustine relates some facts which are even harder of belief.† Should we not fear that raising ourselves above the Jeromes and Gregories and the most learned doctors of the Church is probably the effect of a very dangerous pride?‡ The truth is we shall be rarely at fault in following the opinions of the Church, even when admitting they are no more than very probable, and neither demonstrated nor absolutely infallible.§

\* *Traité des Fêtes*, I. xi., c. xxi., No. 16; and I. ii., c. xx. Conf. *Dogm. Theol.*, t. II., I. xii., c. iv.

† Non crederemus (S. Aug.) si fides christianorum cachinnum metueret. To know his own sentiments upon this head see what he says of the history of Jonas (*Ep. cii., qo. vi.*); of the prodigies worked, in his time, by the relics of S. Stephen.—*Serm.*, xciv., xcvi., cclxxxvi., ccxix., cccxx., cccxxiii., cccxxiv., et *De Civit Dei*, lib. xxi., c. viii., x.—on visions, *Epist. clix. ad Evod.*, &c. With regard to S. Athanasius, see the Life of S. Anthony, &c.

‡ Cf. S. Greg., *M. Dial.*, I. ii., c. xxxv., and I. iv., c. vii. To these passages we may refer the note which Baronius has placed in his Martyrology, 23rd Dec., reproaching Melchior Canus with rashness for having called into question the miracles mentioned by the holy doctor.

§ "Precor te candide lector," says Bollandus, quoting J. Molanus, *de Martyrologiis*, cxxiii., *Appendix ad Martyrologium Usuardi*; "ut in historiis sanctorum legendis tardus esse velis et modestus in reprehendo. Procul absis ab hereticorum ingenio qui testibus Petro et Juda apostolicis, quæcumque ignorant blasphemant. Esto hæc aut illa facta non sint fortassis: at fieri majora potuere a Deo et facta alias. Cave igitur ideo neges facta quia fieri non potuerint vel debuerint. Quæris unde mihi constat fecisse Deum quidquam quod



memoratur : unde tibi constat non fecisse ? Nulla fuit inquis patrandi miracula causa. . . . Unde id nosti ? Scrutatus es nempe omnia Dei consilia ? Nescis ah ! nescis quæ ejus bonitas sit et munificentia. . . . Neque hic periculosas est error ut nesciam ortum Sancti alicujus aut quodpiam ejus factum quorum quædam etiam Sancta Scriptura occuluit. Occiderit S. Georgius draconem verum an metaphoricum quod interest ?"—Act. S.S., *Præf. Gen., c. iii.,* *l. r.* See Note IV. at the end of the book.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HYMNS.

IF it be useful to read beforehand the Lessons of the Breviary, it is almost a necessity to study its Hymns. The greater part of them surprise and disconcert us perhaps at the first glance by their peculiar style, which differs as much from the ease of classical prose as from the elevation of its poetry. Their singular expressions, the arbitrary turn of their phrases, their unexpected comparisons give them a character at once forcible and severe. They bear the stamp of their age, and the character of their authors.\*

S. Ambrose, the author of a great many, remarks that we should dwell less upon the terms than upon their suggestions. † Yet a little study will suffice

\* Ambrosius Doctor, signis insignis et hymnis. Cf. S. Ambr. Orat. in Auxent. *De non tradendis Basilicis*; *Epist. xx. ad Marcell. Soror*; et S. August., *Conf. I., c. ix., viii., xii., et de Beata Vita*, infine—Ex Ambrosii nomine hymni Ambrosiani vocati sunt.—S. Isid., *De Off. Eccles., I. i., c. vi.*

† *Negligere verba debemus*, says he, *pensare mysteria*.—In *Luc., lib. ii.* Those who wish to have the hymns of S. Ambrose just as he composed them would do well to consult the new edition published at Milan, 1862, M. Luighi Bizarghi, with his introduction. The editor restores to the Saint the hymns of which he had been robbed, dismisses apocryphal verses, restores those that had been interpolated, and illustrates them with many notes both philological and archæological. From his explanations it results that S. Ambrose certainly was well acquainted with both the Greek and Latin classics, and that if he did

for understanding them and smoothing over any difficulties. That which seems obscure, and even fanciful, can ordinarily be explained by some analogous passage in the Sacred Scriptures; for the Bible is their soul; it is the Bible that inspired them and interprets their meaning. When we understand that Book well, when familiar with its style, its ideas, and its figures, we soon become at home with these Hymns. We become truly attached to them because we see that, if they have not the elegance and brilliancy of secular verse, they possess in a high degree the qualities that *religious* poetry requires, particularly those that prayer demands; simplicity, unction, humility—the accents of a soul united to the Spirit of God, that does not care to flatter the ear—to pare down its language or weigh its periods—but forgets herself, abases herself, and pours herself out in holy thoughts, and pious affections.\*

Many excellent commentaries have been composed upon the subject of the Hymns of the Divine Office, but we will only mention the *Elucidatorium* of Clichtovœus and the *Elucidatio* of Timothy of Granada. These it would be well, in any difficulty, to consult.†

not take pains to imitate them it was because he thought he ought not to do so, and that he is the author of this new style of poems composed of quaternary iambs which has been adopted by the Church and consecrated by usage.—Baunard, *vie de S. Ambroise*, I. v. c. ii., 1871.

\* On the antiquity and merits of the ecclesiastical hymns may be seen a dissertation which P. Faustin Arevalo, the editor of *Prudentius* and of *S. Isidore of Seville*, has published in his work entitled *Hymnodia hispanica*; Romæ, 1786, 4°.

† *Clichtovæi Iudoci Elucidatorium ecclesiasticum, ad Officium divinum pertinentia planius exponens et quatuor libros amplectens, quorum primus Hymnos adjecta explanatione declarat, secundus non nulla cantica ecclesiastica, Antiphonas et Responsia familiariter explanat*, in folio, has often been re-printed. With regard to grammar and versification nothing can be clearer and

It is well also to know the origin of each of these Hymns. For though in order to value a prayer, it is enough to know that it has been adopted by the Church, we like nevertheless to know who composed it, and when it was consecrated to Divine Worship. It would seem as though we loved it the more, when we know it to have been the outcome of some saintly heart, and that it has for centuries served to unite the ministers of Jesus Christ in one and the same thought and aspiration.\*

more complete than the above; as for pious reflections, they are certainly scarce, though the author indicates the Scripture passages to which allusions are made. In this respect other commentaries may be preferred: v.g., *In Hymnos ecclesiasticas ferme omnes, Mic. Timothei Gratensis, I. V. D. brevis Elucidatio*; Venetiis, 1582. *Explanatio illustris, Joan. Paul. Palanterii in Hymnos ecclesiasticos*; Bononiæ, 1606, etc.

\* "The Church reveres even the ashes of the Saints. She collects all their sayings, and esteems herself more adorned by their unadorned style than by the pompous imagery of the poets."—De La Tour, *Memoirs du Brév.* See Notes VII., VIII., and IX. at the end of this volume.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RESPONSORIES AND ANTIPHONS.

WITH regard to the Responsories and Antiphons, as we have already remarked, they are not all derived from the same source. A certain number of them are drawn from the "Lives and Acts of the Saints," or from the writings of some doctor; others, though not extracted word for word from the inspired books, belong for the most part to Scripture. They are composed of several parts put together, or interpolated in such a manner as to give a fresh meaning and to become applicable to the object of the particular festival.\* If we desire fully to understand them, we must know how to distinguish Divine words from human, and the textual from the derivative sense. Without this a crowd of accessory ideas, of allusions and insinuations, would escape our notice, and the text would lose much of its charm and meaning.

For example, let us take the Antiphons in the Lauds of a Bishop and Confessor, which are so often repeated, and those of Virgins, which may present some difficulty.

The former simply read in their place in the Office, have no other effect than to transfer the thought of the object of the Psalm to that of the Festival, and perhaps

\* Cf. Guzet, *Heortolog.*, I. iii., c. iv., q. 4.

leave us in some uncertainty as to the precise meaning proper to each. But, if brought together and we seek the source, there will be seen a striking picture of sacerdotal perfection, and we shall understand that in the opinion of the Church a Bishop should unite in his own person all the virtues of the most eminent saints.

The Antiphon, *Ecce Sacerdos*, of which the beginning is taken from the praise of Henoch, and the end borrowed from that of Noe, shows that the priesthood requires the innocence of the one with the faith and generosity of the other. It makes us understand that a priest should draw near the heavenly spirits by his purity, and by his constancy show himself the support of religion and of morality against the excesses of the world.

The following Antiphons—*Non est inventus*. . . . and *Ideo* . . . taken from the praise of Abraham, show that the obedience of a minister of Jesus Christ should not be less than that of this patriarch who was without equal upon earth. They also intimate that if we consider the interests of God, He will take care of ours; and that in recompense of the zeal we show for His Law, He will give an abundant fruit to our labours by multiplying through us the number of His children.\* Thus these words, so simple and brief, offer to the mind a fruitful source of light and profit.

The same applies to the Antiphons of Virgins, or of Our Lady. Many of these would surprise the reader, if he did not know to what object they referred, or what is the sense in which they are presented by the Breviary :—*Nigra sum* . . . *Revertere* . . . *Trahe*

\* Cf. Guzet, *Heortolog.*, I. iii., c. xiii., q. 7.



*me . . . Dum esset Rex . . . Læva ejus . . . Specie tua . . . Diffusa est gratia.* . . . But when we know they are so many extracts from the “Song of Solomon,” or of the “XLIV. Psalm,” that in both these compositions, the Holy Ghost celebrates the personal union of the Word with our nature in His incarnation, and His union with the Church through Divine Grace ; when we consider that the Church is to Him, what Eve ought to have been for Adam, not only his image, another self, proceeding from him, but also his spouse, the helper whom he needed for the multiplying of the children of God on earth ; we readily take in the pure and elevated signification of all these Antiphons—and we further understand that while they are applicable to the Church as a body, or to the society of souls that compose it, so they can likewise be applied to each of them in proportion to their sanctity.\* The same observations might be applied to the relation of the Antiphons with the Psalms, to which they are formed, and the “Little Chapters” that follow them.

We may note that the fourth Antiphon at Lauds which announces the Canticle *Benedicte*, is almost always an invitation to bless the Lord :—*Spiritus Justorum . . . Martyres . . . Sacerdotes Domini, benedicite Dominum.* They recall the thought of heaven ; and

\* “Ex hoc Cantico Ecclesia Patres, præsertim sanctum Ambrosium, secuta, multa transtulit in Mariam. Ut hæc : *Vox turturis* vox Mariæ dicentis : *Ecce ancilla*, &c. ; vox suavissima quæ Joannem in utero matris exciverit. Et illud : *Dum esset rex in accubitu suo nardus mea* omniq[ue] odore odoratio[r] castitas invitavit eum. Et illud : *Quæ est ista?* . . . Et illud : *Tota pulchra es.* . . . Et illud : *Videte filia Sion*, &c., aliaque innumerabilia quæ sublimioribus animis convenientia eo magis Mariæ congruunt, non tantum accommodatione pia, sed etiam ad litteram, quo inter sublimissimas ac perfectissimas animas sublimissima ipsa ac perfectissima est.”—Bossuet, in *Cantic. Cantic.* ad Calcem.

dispose us to unite our prayers with those of the blessed, and to take part in their praises :—*Beati pacifici* . . . *Beatus ille servus* . . . *Veni electa mea*. Almost always this same thought recurs in the Antiphon that accompanies the *Laudate Dominum de cælis*.

The Capitula of the Little Hours though taken from the Epistle of the day, are likewise too often and too happily connected with the Antiphons that precede them for it to be supposed that their relation is merely chance. Frequently they seem to mingle together to express one and the same idea. Thus, in the Office of Bishop and Confessor, at Nones :—*Serve bone intra in gaudium Domini tui* . . . *Fungi Sacerdotio*, &c., words which perfectly describe the glorious vocation of a Bishop on earth as in heaven. Sometimes the Capitulum is but the development of the Antiphon. For example, at Sext of the same office, the anthem :—*Ideo* . . . only half expresses the idea that the saint's dignity was the recompense of his virtue ; the Capitulum, however, brings it out fully and forcibly inculcates it :—*Non est in ventus* . . . *Ideo* . . . Ordinarily the relation is less striking, but it remains perceptible. As in the Office of the Apostles at Nones, Antiphon : *In patientia vestra* . . . Capitulum . . . *Ibant Apostoli gaudentes* ; . . . in the Office for virgins and holy women at Nones, Antiphon : *Ista est speciosa* . . . Capitulum : *O quam pulchra est*, or else *Multæ filiæ congregaverunt divitias* . . . *Fallax gratia*. . . . In that of Martyrs there is the same agreement in all the "Hours".\*

\* Upon the Antiphonary may be cited : H. Dissero, Carthusian, Asnaburg, *Expositio Antiphonarii tribus libris expressa*, 1484. The same author has left us also Homilies upon the Divine Office.

It would be very desirable to have in hand a detailed Commentary on the Breviary in which this study might be found, and all its indications collected together. If there be none to meet this want, each ecclesiastic should form one for his own particular use, according to his means and leisure,\* beginning with the "common" and dwelling upon what occurs most frequently.†

No one can deny the usefulness of such a work. We only fear that many may think it above their powers. "Supposing us," it will perhaps be said, "to have the works and requisite ability, when shall we find the leisure required for these researches? Amid the duties and cares of our Ministry we can scarcely find time for the indispensable studies of theology, Holy Scripture, and spiritual writers."

To answer this difficulty it will suffice for us to

\* It is perhaps the most troublesome, but certainly the most effectual method. *Labores manuum tuarum quia manducabis, beatus es et bene tibi erit.*—*Psalm cxxviii. 2.* On this point may be consulted Mart. Sebalus, *Novum Romanum Breviarium in quo Psalterium una cum Hymnis paraphrasibus succinctissimis distincto caractere insertis est adornatum*; Moguntiae, 1622. Th. Declo., *Dichiarazioni di tutto cio' che vi ha o difficile di intendersi o interessante in ogni parte del Breviario*; Anconae, 3 vols. 4°, 1771, 1772. We have also seen in the Library of Chaumont (Haute-Marne) a manuscript, entitled *Expositio seu Postillae super Horas*, by J. Lhullier. This very ancient commentary, which consists of true apostillae or marginal notes, does not extend beyond the *Psalm Confitemini* of Prime. The author appears to have been a former Bishop of Meaux, confessor to Louis XI., and founder of the University. Lastly, we would remark that since our first edition, F. Schouppe, a Jesuit, has published for the use of seminaries an elementary course of Holy Scripture, in which, following the idea that we have put forth, that is to say, from the Breviary and liturgical aspects, he has explained many of the Epistles, Gospels and Psalms, especially those of the "Common"; 2 vols. 8vo, Paris, Bray.

† The Common of Saints, which is referred to almost daily, is precisely that part of the Breviary least commented upon. This arises from the fact that there were few feasts of the saints in the middle ages. See at the end of the volume, Note X.

explain our idea upon the matter. In the first place, we do not pretend to lay down as of obligation that which the Church does not enforce as law. We limit ourselves merely to propose what the importance of the Divine Office, the honour of God, and the welfare of our souls seem to advise. Secondly, next to the time devoted to the performance of essential duties, we know of none that could be better, perhaps, employed than in instructing ourselves in the Divine Office and its proper recital ; for, indeed, what better can we do than praise God in the name of the Church, and with our Lord's spirit ? What more important than to fulfil in a worthy manner so holy a duty ? \*

And again, we think that a priest without adding to his work and ordinary exercise, might be able to put in practice the greater number of the practices we have recommended. As he makes it a rule to read and meditate every morning the Word of God, what is there to hinder his studying in the Office those portions of Scripture which the Church requires him to recite ? Are they not the most interesting parts, and the most useful to know ? What indeed should prevent him from taking, as subject of his meditations, the most beautiful prayers of the Breviary—those of the Common

\* " Utinam hæc saperent et intelligerent plurimi de clero qui sui status prorsus immemores alienis toti studiis, propria negligunt suum pessumsumdant officium et in divinorum legibus quas ex munere scire manent adstricti rudes penitus inveniri non erubiscunt !"—Cavallerius, *Commentaria in authentica Sacrae congregationis Rituum decreta* ; Romæ, 1757. " Ut divinas laudis Sion non tantum ore murmurent, sed et corde persolvent, numquam a manibus eorum sacra Biblia deponatur. Nam ut quæ legunt et canunt discant intelligere tota vita vix sufficerit, si tamen quid est in litteris sacris quod totum humanis intellectus assequi possit, aliis subinde divitiarum fonticulis ex eodem fonte semper scaturientibus."—*Conc. Colon.*, 1536, p. 11, v.

of Saints, for example? This is the way to know and appreciate, in a short time, the inspired portion of the Office. And why not apply the same method to the traditional part, or that which is of ecclesiastical origin, to the homilies and legends? Why not sometimes make them the subject of spiritual reading? Is it not for our edification and instruction that the Church has made this collection, and can we suppose that She does not know how to choose that which is most useful to the wants of Her ministers? Let the trial be made and it will be seen that, instead of wasting precious time in the study of the Office, the secret will have been discovered of rendering useful and fruitful the time employed in its recital. Better understood, the prayers will then be uttered with more attention and relish. Whilst becoming richer in merit, a mass of information will be thus acquired as interesting as it is of value. The finest passages of Scripture, the maxims of the fathers, the striking incidents of Church history, and the lives of the saints will become fixed in the memory, and will penetrate the soul. Thus, whilst the study of the Office will dispose us to pray, prayer will preserve the knowledge acquired by study, and the mind and heart will derive an equal profit from the practice. With the same ease may be attained some general notions of the composition of the Office, which, properly speaking, is the object of liturgical science.\*

\* Let us cite here as an example F. Aquaviva, General of the Company of Jesus, a man as eminent for his learning as for his piety. At the head of a commentary on *Psalms cxviii.*, which he composed in his latter years, and which was published after his death, we read that he undertook this work from an esteem for the Divine Office, so that he might be able to recite it with more

unction, and that he was recompensed according to his desire. “Percepit ille salis uberem sui laboris fructum. Namque profitibatur post eas meditationes haud paulo melius horariam sibi psalmodiam succedere, dum quibus insueverat cogitationibus, earum aliqua inter psallendum velut sua sponte succurrit.” See **Note XI.** at the end of the book.



## CHAPTER VII.

### ON THE PLAN AND STRUCTURE OF THE DIVINE OFFICE.

IT is not enough to have studied in a separate manner the different parts of the Breviary, and understand each passage that enters into its compilation. This very wording even is the embodiment of a design and the fruit of an idea. The parts of the Office have not been united together in a haphazard manner; they have been arranged according to certain principles, coordinated to a certain end, and chosen according to a particular design. It is this that gives it the character of an intellectual work, and that originates liturgical studies. So long as these principles have not been realized, so long as this design has not been seized, so long, in fine, as we remain strangers to this plan, we may know the details of the Office, but we remain ignorant of the Office itself; just as we cannot have the knowledge of physical man, the science of his organisation, so long as we confine ourselves to the study of each individual member without considering the relations of the various members to each other, and the part each plays in the economy of the human body.\*

\* "At first sight this succession and this medley, as it were, of psalms, antiphons, versicles, benedictions, &c., may appear fanciful and inexplicable. Nevertheless it is all founded upon intrinsic reasons in which are admirably reflected the mind and wisdom of the Church. Every serious and impartial

But where shall we find this science of relation, this whole view, for which the foregoing studies can only serve as a preparation? We may find it in a high degree in the great liturgists who brought to their labours that spirit of faith and piety the subject demands.\* We find it particularly in those ancient works, in those monuments of learning and piety, composed at a time when acquaintance with and love of the Divine Worship was much greater than it is to-day; when the Office was regarded as the becoming expression of the sentiments of our Lord in His Church; when it was felt that everything in so holy a work should be based on the wisest principles and most exalted views; and when it was thought that life itself could not be better employed than in seeking after these principles, exposing these views, and in labouring to make them the better understood and more appreciated. Who have been better able to understand the symbols of the sacred language? Who have penetrated deeper into its mysteries? Who can speak of it with greater authority than these learned and pious doctors whose lives, passed far away from the tumult of the world, in the silence of the cloister or

observer will acknowledge that this Office forms a perfectly ordered whole, and that even in its smallest details it is most solidly designed. The more it is studied the more will it be valued."—Allioli, *Motifs intrinsèques des Heures canonicales*.

\* An enumeration of these authors is to be found in the *Tables de la Patrologie latine*, t. i., p. 958; *Opera Patrum liturgica usque ad Inn.*, iii., 1215; in F. A. Zaccaria, *Bibliotheca ritualis*, t. ii.; et *Appendix*, t. iii.; in Roskovany, *Cœlibatus et Breviarium*, t. v.; *Monumenta et litteratura*. The oldest liturgical works have been collected together and often published in a single volume folio, under this title—*De divinis Ecclesiæ Officiis ac ministeriis varii veterum Patrum ac scriptorum libri, videlicet B. Isidori Alcuini, Amalarii, Rabani Mauri, Walafriidi Strabonis, B. Yvonis, Radulphi de Revo, &c.*

of the basilica, were entirely devoted to meditation of Christian truths and the celebration of the Divine Worship? \*

This is not saying that liturgical science was already at that time perfect, or that the works of that period leave nothing to be desired. Certainly not. Their merits do not free them from defect. Neglecting form too much in their writings, these liturgists expose themselves to the charge of dryness and diffusiveness. It may be thought that they exaggerate the tendency of the principles they lay down. Sometimes imagination is substituted for reality; sometimes they allow conjecture to stand instead of demonstration. Moreover, they always place themselves on a different standpoint to us. When explaining the Divine Office they begin by describing it as it was presented to them in the monastic churches or cathedrals with its attendant ceremonies and variety of personages, the solemn chant and diversity of the ceremonies used in the choir. From all this it results that in our readings of these authors we are not to neglect reflection and discernment.† But, by

\* To them we may apply the words of Isaias—*Prudentes eloquii mystici*—iii. 3. According to S. Gregory the Great, the word of God is like the lamp of the sanctuary; the letter is the vase, the spiritual sense is its flame. The love of holy things which exists in the heart of the priest who meditates upon this divine word is the oil that gives it its heat and brightness.—*In I. Reg., i. 4.*

† Further, it is desirable to initiate ourselves in the understanding of these works by reading some more elementary treatise composed under their inspiration, for example, *Exposition litterale et mystique des rubriques du Bréviaire, faite pour l'usage des seminaires*, by Raymond Bonald, priest, doctor of theology, 12°, Lyon, 1679; *Les Raisons de l'Office et des ceremonies*, by Claude Villette, canon of the Church of S. Marcel-les-Paris, 4°, 1611; *Le Manuel du Bréviaire Romani ou sont exposées clairement et méthodiquement les raisons historiques et mystiques des Heures canoniales*, by Arnould de Peyronnet, 12°, Toulouse, 1667. The first of these works is very elementary, but

side of these faults, of which the first amongst these writers, Amalaire de Metz,\* Rupert de Duitz,† and even Durandus of Mende,‡ the most excellent of all are not exempt, we cannot deny them the possession of qualities which we should seek for in vain elsewhere, namely, the true method that becomes the subject ; a profound knowledge of religion, of Scripture, and of the fathers ; a perfect acquaintance with liturgical principles and proceedings ; a delicate sense regarding matters of faith and piety ; in fine, lofty and fruitful views which enlighten and quicken ; at the same time which inspire a most profound esteem for the Church and for Her worship ; which give a supernatural aspect to the smallest matters of practice ; and which discover sublime instructions where we should often, perhaps, see only observances at once arbitrary and without purport. §

precise, solid, and pious ; the second abounds in views which, however, are often personal and arbitrary ; the third is lengthy, but is clear, judicious and founded upon authorities. To these authors we may add M. Olier, whose writings, particularly *Le catechisme chretien pour la vie interieure*, are well calculated to make us enter into the spirit of our Lord's mysteries, and consequently into that of the feasts of the Church and of Her Office.

\* *De divinis Officiis*, lib. iv. Composed in 820 and dedicated to Louis le Debonnaire, who had opened his library to the author.

† *De divinis Officiis*, lib. xciii., 1135. This author goes through all the offices of the year, and dilates upon the lessons and prayers.

‡ His *Rationale divinatorum Officiorum* (1286) is, as it were, the sum or complete code of Catholic liturgy. Of this work it has been said : *Cæteri utiles iste necessarius*. According to Dom Gueranger's opinion, *it is the last word of the middle ages upon the mysticism of Divine worship*. It was the first book printed in metal type. There are many editions of it.

§ We do not extend this praise to the liturgists of the eighteenth century, nor to those of the preceding age. In general they neglect the sense of the rubrics and ceremonies, and only seek their historical origin and material rules. It is true that in this respect many of them have considerable merit : Thomassin—*Traité historique et dogmatique sur l'Office divin et les fêtes de l'Eglise* ; Grancolas—*Traité de l'Office divin et de ses diverses parties, et Com-*

Instructed by such masters, and enlightened by meditation, the mind becomes opened to the meaning of the liturgical mysteries. Little by little the veil is lifted, the ideas become clear. We begin to understand the plan of the Office, we perceive its harmony, we grasp its unity. The confused notion which we previously had of it becomes precise and develops itself. Soon everything takes a different hue ; the feasts, ceremonies, and prayers appear filled with admirable meaning. A thousand divine emblems unfold themselves to the soul ; and those explanations which we had found so strange now strike us by their clearness. True, we have still but shadows ; but these shadows speak and reveal the most sublime things. It seems as though we possessed another sense, or that we hear a new language. We are surprised that we could have remained deaf so long to this music, and had seen nothing in this picture ; and, like S. Augustine speaking of the Scriptures, we compare the state in which we had hitherto lived to that of a child, or of a man without study, who, beholding a work in manuscript, can only admire the hand of the copyist and the beauty of its execution without understanding the ideas it embodies.\*

*mentaire historique de l'Office divin.* We regret to have to remark that the erudition of these works should be impaired by certain unfair and unfounded criticisms. From this defect the work of Cardinal Bona, *De divina Psalmodia*, is exempt. This learned author, whilst preserving the exalted views and holy unction of the ancient commentators, has known how to add to whatever was most edifying in the writings of his predecessors upon the Divine Office, the results which his own researches had yielded him of interesting details concerning its history and varieties.

\* Quemadmodum qui videt litteras in codice scripto et non novit legere, laudat quidem antiquarii manum, admirans apicum pulchritudinem sed quid sibi velint quid indicent illi apices nescit et est oculis laudator mente non cognitor ; alius autem et laudat artificium et capit intellectum ille utique qui



That these enjoyments are not given in the same degree to all we readily admit. Such sweet and pure pleasures, if tasted, suppose a peculiar habit or uncommon gifts of nature and grace. They demand in those who possess them a deep knowledge of religion and of the Holy Scripture, the love of prayer, union with God, calmness of mind, purity of heart, and neglect of worldly and profane things. *Montes excelsi cervis.\** But even when we cannot rise to this height, when we must pause at the first step of the sanctuary, and content ourselves with

non solum videre quod commune est omnibus, potest, sed etiam legere."—S. Aug., *Serm. xlii., de Verb. Dom.* There is not, says a pious author, a sweeter pleasure for the soul than to discover these secret meanings, this heavenly wisdom, this divine word hidden under the veil of the letter or in the obscurity of a symbol. It is a joy like that felt by the Magi in the presence of the Saviour clothed with our nature and bound in swaddling clothes: *Gavisii sunt gaudio magno valde. Matt. ii. 10.*

\* *Psalm ciii. 18.* That which is most frequently wanting in order to understand and enjoy the Divine Office is purity of heart—*Beati mundo corde.—Mat. v. 8. Cor purum penetrat cælum et infirmum.—Imit. ii. 4.* There are, says Cassian, an infinite number of God's languages which men do not understand, because their passions form, as it were, a barrier that prevent these words from coming in all their strength and brightness to them.—*Confer. xiv. 14.* Study, no doubt, is useful, and reflection still more so; however, the Holy Ghost can by His interior unction supply these which neither study nor reflection can supply, the want of His grace. *Utilis lectio, utilis eruditio sed magis unctio necessaria quæ sola docet nos de omnibus.*—S. Bern. The venerable Mother Agnes of Jesus often received understanding of the words of the Office although she had never learnt Latin. On the Feast of the Purification, 1626, God poured into her soul so much light on this mystery, that she heard and understood the whole meaning of the psalms and lessons.—*Vie par M. de Lantage, p. iii., c. v.* God granted the same favour several times to S. Lutgarde and to many others. We read in the life of B. Giles, a companion of S. Francis, that he had ordinarily such abundance of light in reciting the psalm that one verse would furnish him with a hundred different expositions. *O si semel quid de adipe frumenti unde satiatur Jerusalem degustasses,* writes S. Bernard to a religious, one of his friends who was given to study and prayer, *quam libenter istas crustas rodendas littera toribus Judæis relinqueres! Experto crede. Epist. cvi.*



gathering some rays from the light bestowed upon others, even then would there not be sufficient advantage to draw our affections and inquiries in this direction? It is sweet to behold the share we have, and the function we perform, in this never-ceasing chorus of praise that ascends to the glory of our Divine Master. The duty laid upon us is so holy and sublime, it answers so well to its object, that it is impossible to contemplate its excellence and mysteries without experiencing an unrivalled admiration and happiness.

Who is there that would not be ravished at the sight of the Incarnate Word glorifying His Father unceasingly on earth as well as in heaven? filling and consecrating, by the expression of His praises, the whole extent of the world and entire duration of time, ever reproducing and developing His different mysteries in order to communicate their spirit to His ministers, and to spread it through them among the hearts of the faithful? For such is the sight presented by the Divine Office when considered in the writings of those who have received the gift of understanding it. *Plena est omnis terra gloria ejus.\**

In the highest heaven infinitely above all His creatures God shows Himself in His unchangeable and fruitful Unity the essential object of every blessing and hope. Before Him, the head of His Church, Jesus Christ, appears, the worthy praise of His Father, His sole worthy and perfect praise. That He might

\* "Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, et ea quæ sub ipso erant replebant templum. Seraphim stabant et clamabant alter ad alterum Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus exercituum. Plena est omnis terra gloria ejus,"—*Isa. vi. 1, &c.*

multiply His homage and satisfy His zeal the Man-God associates with Himself the most elevated minds, the holiest hearts, the purest lips, and these He makes His own instruments. All these lips, all these minds, all these hearts praise God with Him, and glorify the Eternal King by Him. Whilst His ministers pronounce the formula of His thoughts the Word Incarnate offers these sentiments to His Father, and by His grace He shares them with those who give utterance to them. So it is not only the members of Jesus Christ who pray, each separately, whilst their Head reigns in heaven in the impassibility of bliss; it is Jesus Christ Himself praying by His members; it is the Eternal Pastor, the Great High Priest, living in His ministers, Who never ceases, according to His word, to honour, praise, and bliss His Father out of the fulness of His Sacred Heart, and in the society of His saints. *In consilio justorum et congregatione.*—Ps. cx. i.

Not only have we this joy of admiring God and of blessing Him, with and through Jesus Christ, in the most close and intimate union, but as S. Augustine says, it is in Jesus Christ that we adore Him and bless Him. For God is in His Son to bless and unite to Himself the world (2 Cor. v. 19),\* and it is in this Tabernacle that He presents Himself to the homage and praise of the Church.

Accordingly the mysteries of our Saviour fill up the circle of our solemnities. As a constant manifestation of His intentions and of His life, the Divine Office inces-

\* "Orat pro nobis ut sacerdotes, orat in nobis ut caput nostrum, oratur in nobis ut Deus noster. Agnoscamus ergo in illo voces nostras, et voces ejus in nobis."—S. Aug., in *Psalm lxxviii*.

santly reminds us of the various states through which He has passed ; first, His birth, His manifestation to the Gentiles, His presentation in the temple ; then His preaching, His sufferings, and death ; lastly, His resurrection, ascension, and His heavenly triumph in His own person and in that of His saints. In all these mysteries the Word made flesh appears at one and the same time as the beginning and end of the Church's homage ; adoring as Man, adored as God ; and embracing in His twofold nature, and with every perfection and merit, the worship of heaven and earth, the religion of time and eternity. *Totius mundi una vox Christus.\** Such is the idea underlying the Divine Office. † This view, though hasty, may enable us to understand the wonders it contains ; for its execution equals the design, and the details correspond to the whole as much as the glory of God and the honour of the Church demand.

We may say, in fact, that if the Holy Ghost has not inspired its every thought He has watched over and guided those who wrote it. He has placed on this book, as upon that which is His own writing, the seal of Wisdom and Power. *Hunc Pater signavit*

\* S. Jerom., *Epist. lx., ad Heliod. 4.*

† We have in the Apocalypse a lively image of it. "Ecce in cælo sedes posita et super sedem sedens. Et vidi in media throni et quatuor animalium et in medio seniorum, Agnum stantem tanquam occisum. Et cum aperuisset librum quatuor seniores ceciderunt coram Agno habentes singuli citharas et phialas aureas plenas odorum quæ sunt orationes sanctorum. Et cantabant canticum novum. Et vidi et audiui vocum Angelorum multorum, et omnem creaturam quæ in cælo est et super terram et sub terra, et quæ sunt in mari omnes audiui dicentes ; *Sedenti in throno et Agno benedictio et honor et gloria et potestas in sæcula sæculorum.* Et quatuor animalia dicebant : *Amen.* Et viginti quatuor seniores ceciderunt in facies suas et adoraverunt in sæcula sæculorum."—*C. v.*

*Deus.\** Everything in it is full not only of holy and affecting instincts, but of artistic combinations and beauties unspeakable. *Mirabili altitudine et mirabili humilitate.*—S. Aug., *de Doctr. Christ. civ.* Everything is harmony and mystery in its substance as in its expression.—*Intus et foris.†*

The various parts of the “Hours,” their connection with our existence—which is only for a day on earth, but which is to last for all eternity—the succession of solemnities and offices, the agreement of each Office with the object it celebrates, and the place which it

\**Joan. vi. 27.* “Spiritus sancti ordine et arte divinum Officium ordinatum est.”—Thom. à Kempis, *de Discipl. claustr. xviii.* “No book, after the Bible, is marked with a more divine spirit than the Roman Breviary. For more than thirteen centuries it has been read in all parts of the world. It is specially the Book of the Church, the only one that can be called Catholic, having been composed by and for the Church. Its title alone fills me with respect and confidence—*Breviarium romanum ex decreto S. Concilii Tridentini restitutum, S. Pii V. jussu editum, Clementis VIII. et Urbani VIII. auctoritate recognitum.* These words remind me that I am united to the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, the only true Church, and through her to my God. I speak, think, and pray as she does. These ideas enlarge my soul, reassure and encourage me.”—De La Tour, *Memoire II., de l'Union avec Rome.* “The form like the substance of this work presents a superhuman character. We are compelled to acknowledge in it, particularly, that wonderful union of simplicity with depth which S. Augustine was never weary of admiring in Holy Scripture, and which he adduces as one of the most visible evidences of the Spirit of God—*Humillimo loquendi genere se præbens omnibus et exercens intentionem eorum qui non sunt leves corde.*”—*Conf., lib. vi. v.* “*Omnibus accessibilis quamvis paucissimis penetrabilis.*”—*Epist. cxxxvii.*

† *Apoc. vi. 1.* “Intus per spiritualement intellectum, foris per sensum litterarum simplicem.”—S. Greg., *M. in Ezech., lib. i., hom. ix.* “Intus et foris quia et dictis occultioribus sublimioribusque satiantur fortes et præceptis apertioribus nos parvuli nutrimur.”—*Ibid., hom. x.* “Quæcumque in officiis ecclesiasticis consistunt divinis plena sunt signis atque mysteriis; ac singula sunt cælesti dulcedine redundantia, si tamen diligentem habeant inspectorem, qui novit mel de petra sugere olivumque de saxi durissimo.”—Durand, *Rationale in procem.*

occupies, everything reveals a thought superior to human ideas; everything discovers the action of Him Who multiplies wonders without effort, and Who includes in the oneness of His vision the endless variety of persons and things. Nowhere, outside the Holy Scripture, can piety find a more delicious or more useful study. I am not surprised, therefore, to hear Bossuet point out to men of the world this book as a monument of the Church's wisdom,\* and S. Francis of Sales, whose mind was so judicious and discreet, pronounce that he was not acquainted with any more admirable and excellent work.†

\* After *letter cxix.* déclaration à M. de Bordes. Edit. de Versailles.

† S. Fr. de Sales. "*Modele et guide du prêtre et du pastuer*" (part i., c. vii.). To these two authorities it would be easy to add others. Cardinal d'Astros, Archbishop of Toulouse, taught by his own example what love his clergy ought to feel for the Breviary, and what consolations they might obtain from it. "Being still a simple priest," says he, "and vicar-capitular of Paris, I was denounced to Napoleon as having published a papal bull contrary to Cardinal Maury's assumptions and the imperial policy. I was taken to Vincennes and was put under the most rigorous seclusion. I saw all my papers carried off, all my books, even my Breviary. Thus by this very privation I learnt how much light, peace, and strength I owed to my 'Office'. Accordingly it was my Breviary before everything else that I sought to be restored to me. By dint of repeated applications and after a long delay I got it restored to me, and from that moment I became half reconciled to my prison. I no longer felt weariness. I did not confine myself to reciting my Office with care; I strove to study, to meditate, and penetrate its depths. I annotated the psalms, the prophets, the epistles. I made them subjects of prayer; I drew from them subjects of instruction for a future day. In short, this occurrence was for me the beginning of an intimacy with the Divine Office which has become one of the greatest graces and sweetest joys of my life."—See his Life by F. Caussette. "It was chance, apparently," says F. (now Cardinal) Newman, "that initiated me into the knowledge of the Breviary, that admirable and attractive monument of the devotion of the Saints. When Hurrel (Froude) died in 1836 I was asked to choose, as a souvenir, one of his books. Hesitating, I was running over the shelves before me, when an intimate friend who was by my side said, 'Come, take this one!' It was the Breviary that Hurrel had used. I took it,



This is not the place to enter into details ; it would take too long to show by examples all the wealth that an upright mind and a pure heart may discover beneath the letter of the Divine Office. But should any one suspect us of exaggeration we would beg them to enter upon a study which would enable them to judge for themselves from their own experience.\* If at first they should be displeased, as in the lives of the Saints for example, by a certain negligence and some external imperfections, their minds will not be slow to rise above considerations of an inferior order. Superficial forms will soon disappear, and it will be found only natural that in such a work, in which so many authors have necessarily had a share, each one must have left the impress of his own country and period.† Far, then,

I studied it, and from it I took the substance of my Tract on the Roman Breviary, the appearance of which frightened my own friends. From that time this book has never left me. I always have it on my table and use it daily.”—*History of my religious opinions, part iii.* See also Cardinal Wiseman in *Dublin Review*, t. xiii., Nov. 1842.—*On the poetry of the liturgical prayers.*

\* “Quærite et invenietis ; pulsate et aperiatur vobis. Quærite legendo et invenietis meditando ; pulsate orando et aperiatur vobis contemplando.”—S. Bernard, *de modo orandi*. “Lecto evangelio codex evangelicus apertus datur sacerdoti osculandus, cœteris vero clausus ac si dicatur ei. Tibi datum est nosse mysterium regni Dei, cœteris vero in parabolis.”—Hilder, *Serm. xcvi., de Div.*

† We should not feel surprised that men versed in literature or in profane sciences do not all at once relish the beauties of the Office. To enjoy light it is not enough that the sun shines ; it is necessary to possess good sight capable of bearing its brilliancy. Tastes change with dispositions—“Propterea vide ut potes modo et cum plus poteris plus videbis.”—S. Bern., *in Cant., Serm. xlv., n. 5.* “Olim mihi Tullius dulcesebat ; blandiebantur carmena poetarum ; Lex, Prophetæ, Evangelium et omnis gloria sententiarum Domini mei et servorum ejus aut parva videbantur aut nulla ; nescio quomodo nunc dulcius immurmurat filius Jesse et omnes illos quos diligere consueveram, elingues reddit et mutos.”—Petr. Dam., *Serm. de Nativ. Christi.*



from lessening their admiration, this reflection of the perpetuity and catholicity of the Church will serve but as another charm for their hearts.\* In fine, they will thank God for having placed in the Sanctuary a source of life so abundant and pure, and they will bless the Church for having laid on Her ministers the duty of drawing from it that religious spirit which ought always to animate them.

Such are, we know, the sentiments of all our brethren,—such the testimony that is afforded throughout the Church by Her most earnest and zealous clergy. Even in those quarters, where recently contrary prejudices had the mastery, it is now a point of honour to recognise and proclaim the merit of the Divine Office. It is a comfort to us to give here some proof of this.

“For every serious and impartial judge,” says Dr. Allioli, Provost of the Cathedral of Augsbourg, “the Office is far from being a confused medley of prayers taken at haphazard; on the contrary, it is a learned composition, a perfectly ordered and designed whole even in its least parts; it is an eminently pious and eminently sacerdotal book of prayers.”†

Again, writes a learned professor of the University of Tübinger,—“Urban VIII. has put the last touch to the reformation of the Breviary; and very fortunately there

\* “In order to appreciate this work—the Divine Office—it should be looked at as a whole, in all its relations to antiquity, history, canon law, music, poetry; without this it will never be understood.”—D. Gueranger, *Defense des Instit. lit.*, p. 138. “On the other hand, the unity desired by the Church is not a material and Judaic unity, but a living unity brought about by a legitimate progress free from peril.”—*Ibid.*, *Lettre a l'Archeveque de Reims*. Also Card. Wiseman, *II. Lecture on Holy Week*.

† *Ueber die inneren Motive der Kanonischen Horen, Schlussbemerkung*, 1848.

is no question now-a-days of any further reform. The Divine Office contains so much edifying and instructive matter that we ask with wonder how, at one time, it could have been turned into ridicule, and spoken of with contempt."\*

Lastly, a pious and learned ecclesiastic of the Diocese of Soleure, M. J. Duret, thus closes a remarkable study of the Divine Office: "My own intimate conviction, which I would desire to inculcate into the heart of every priest, is this—that the structure of the Office is not susceptible of any notable change, and that to undertake any reform of its substance would be to destroy a wonderful masterpiece of execution and design. If the Office be found without attraction, it is not the Breviary that is to blame. The reason, alas! lies in ourselves; in our little esteem and love for prayer. It is in this direction that reform is needed; it is here the healing touch is required. May the Holy Ghost deign to cause His grace to abound in the souls of all His priests; then every one will taste how sweet is the Office and learn to profit by it."†

\* Dr. Probst, *Brevier und Breviergebet*, Tübingen, 1868.

† *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Katholische Theologie*, Wien, 1854. VII., XI. *Die Schœnheiten des Officiums in festo Corporis Christi*. Many other names equally significant might be added, as Amberger, Heffle, Nickel, Janner, &c.

*Item*. Mabillon, *Disquisitio de cursu Gallicano*, No. 75.

## TREATISE III.

*On the best means of preserving attention and piety whilst reciting the Divine Office.*

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### CHAPTER I.

FIRST PRACTICE : BEGIN BY RECOLLECTING OURSELVES  
AND ASKING FOR GRACE TO PRAY WELL.

NO method, however excellent it may be, can supply for the spirit of prayer, though there are certain practices that may serve to awaken this spirit and maintain it in the soul.\* In order to neglect nothing in a work of so great importance we will here note, with some developments, those means which holy priests have made use of, and which seem to us to be useful.

\* On this point may be read with much advantage :—Oliv. Bonartius, *de Institutione, obligatione, et religione Horarum libri tres* ; Duaci, 1624, 8vo.—Anacl. Siccus, *de Ecclesiastica Hymnodia libri tres* ; Antuerpæ, 8vo, 1634.—Rossi, S.J., *Echo in terris ex harmonia Beatorum in cœlis* ; Elvaci, 1724.—Stengel, *Thuribulum aureum . . . id est de Septem Horis canonicis* ; Aug. Vind., 1622.—P. A. Persicus, *de primo ac præcipuo Sacerdotis officio* ; Neapoli, 1643, 4to.—Horstius, *Enchiridion Divini Officii* ; Coloniae, 1623, 12mo.—M. Mazowiecki, S.J., *Sacerdos orans sen de Horis rite recitandis* ; Constantiæ, 1659, 12mo.—Mazzæi, *Methodus sacerdotalis circa missam et divinum officium* ; Macerata, 1702.—J. Marchantius, *Virga Aaronis florens, hoc est directio vitæ sacerdotalis ex SS. Patribus, etc.*, folio.—Alvarez de Paz, *Opera Spiritualia*, t. iii.—L. Pontanus, S.J., *de Perfectione Christianæ*, t. iv., tit. iii.; 4to, 1616.—Giustinelli, *Modo di fruttuosamente recitare l'Officio del Signore et della B. Vergine* ; in Roma, 1628.—Albergotti, *della divina Salmodia* ; Arezzo, 1818.

We begin with those which first require to be observed. *Qui timet Dominum nihil negligit.\** One of the most important rules for the guidance of the mind is, to apply all our powers to the occupation of the moment. *Age quod Agis.†* Ordinarily speaking, we think but little of what we are doing, because we are preoccupied with a thousand different things, particularly with what we may have just been doing, before we began our Office. This is owing to the nature of our soul, which is disturbed by every exercise, where every thought leaves a furrow, and whose emotions are but slowly calmed. Therefore, it is necessary before beginning any important work that requires a sustained attention, such as the Divine Office, to take, first of all, a few moments to recall our faculties, to detach our mind from the objects that engage its attention, and by self-recollection, dispose ourself for the duty we are about to perform.‡

It is what the Holy Ghost declares when He recommends us to prepare our souls before prayer, and not to call upon the Lord in a thoughtless manner without respect for His greatness. *Ante orationem præpara animam tuam, et noli esse quasi homo qui tentat Deum.§ Custodi pedem tuum ingrediens domum Dei.|| Ne sit cor tuum velox ad proferendum sermonem coram Dei; Deus enim est in cælo et tu super terram.\*\**

\* *Eccles. vii. 19.*

† *Imit. lib. iii., c. xlvii.*

‡ "Juxta multos quando Dominus dicit Moysi : Ne appropies huc : Solve calceamentum de pedibus tuis locus enim in quo stas terra sancta est ; nihil aliud significavit nisi ut sollicitudines sæculares abjiceret huic mortali vitæ adhærentes ; nam pelles unde conficiuntur calceamenta mortuorum animalium sunt."—*Theodoret. Quæst. vii. in Exod.*

§ *Eccles. xviii. 23.*

|| *Eccles. iv. 17.*

\*\* *Eccles. v. 1.*

S. Charles was so penetrated with this thought, and attached so much importance to the perfect performance of the Divine Office, that he never began it till after a quarter of an hour's meditation and prayer. The venerable John d'Avila had the same custom, and knew how to make it agreeable to his disciples. There is a fine instance in his history written by F. Louis de Grenada.

"One day," says this pious and learned author, "I met a priest of the Society of Jesus whom this servant of God directed in the way of perfection. This father asked me if it would be agreeable to me to recite the Office with him ; then, as I expressed myself accordingly, he fell on his knees, pronouncing these words, which I have never forgotten : 'There are some who speak of saying the Office as if it were a mere trifle. Come, say they, let us say our hours together ; and so immediately begin. This is showing very little appreciation of so holy a duty, for it well merits a few moments at least of recollection.' We remained silent for an instant to collect our thoughts and put ourselves in the presence of God ; then we recited our hours very gravely and devoutly. Would to God," adds with reason this pious writer, "that every ecclesiastic might bring the same preparation to the recital of the Divine Office ! then souls would obtain from it a far different result."

A great doctor, S. Bonaventure, made a similar reflection whilst giving his novices the like advice. "You should never," he said, "begin to recite the Office before disposing yourselves to it by recollection and prayer. It is on account of neglect of this preparation that we

are so often lax and negligent in this work. As it is begun without fervour, it is but natural that we end it more cold than before and with our hearts just as dissipated." \*

To recollection of mind it is well to add a short and earnest prayer. In fact, it is a grace to be able to say the Office well. It is God only who can enlighten those eyes of the heart that enable us to contemplate His Majesty and penetrate His mysteries.† It is only the Lamb who can open and explain the book of His thoughts.‡ It is only the Holy Ghost, the Author of the inspired Word, Who communicates to us its meaning. *Ipse dat sapientiam sapientibus, et scientiam intelligentibus disciplinam.*§ Far from being superfluous, the prayer by which we ask for grace to pray well is the most fruitful of all, since it contributes to give to our other prayers their merit and efficacy.

Thus, likewise, we find at the beginning of the Breviary, a prayer, *Aperi Domine*, designed to recall the disposition of mind the minister of the Church ought to have, and to obtain for them the help required to enable them properly to discharge this duty. However, as it is not of obligation, nothing hinders those who fear routine

\* "Studeant oratione devotâ et recollectione Animi internâ divinum præveniri Officium."—*Spec. discip. p. II, c. xii.* "Ideo tam tepidi et disides sumus in Divino Officio quia ante non sumus in aliqua devotione excitati, et ita sicut intravimus frigidi, eximus corde dissipati."—*Institut. novit.*

† "Deus Domini nostri Jesu Christi Pater Gloriæ, de vobis spiritum sapientiæ et illuminatos oculos cordis."—*Ephes. i. 18.*

‡ "Supplicandum Domino ut veniat Agnus ex tribu Juda, et ipse librum signatum dignetur aperire. Ipse enim qui Scripturas adaperiens accendit corda discipulorum ita ut dicant; Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat intra nos cum aperiret nobis Scripturas?"—*Orig. Hom. xii. in Ex. super vel. Moys.*

§ *Dan. xi. 21.*



from substituting another occasionally. S. Francis Xavier preferred the *Veni Creator Spiritus*. "He pronounced the words so ardently," says one of his biographers, "that his heart seemed ready to burst from love." A certain religious loved to recite before Vespers, the prayer which is said at Mass before the Gospel :—*Munda cor meum* . . . or else the *Suscipe Sancta Trinitas*, which precedes the Canon. Another was very fond of the beautiful Collect—*Deus cui omne cor patet*.\* A third made it a rule when he recited many hours consecutively, to repeat before each the last words of the *Aperi, Domine in unione*. . . . or this strophe of the ancient hymn of the Apostles during Paschal time :

Jesu Rex clementissime  
 Tu nostra corda posside  
 Ut tibi laudas debitas  
 Solvamus omni tempore.†

In fine, we think we might often, during a retreat, for example, very usefully read the second chapter of the Third Book of the Imitation, which seems as if it were written for the purpose. However, whatever be the practice adopted as a preparation, whether it be a prayer or a meditation, we should behave with calmness and gentleness, with the sole purpose of establishing ourselves in recollection, freedom of mind, and that fervour of soul necessary in order to pray well.

\* S. Philip Neri loved this prayer, and said it at Mass as often as the rubric allowed.

† *Hymn. Laud. ante reform.*, a strophe often repeated by S. Louis Bertrand, *Life*, by J. B. Feuillet, I. ii., c. v.

## CHAPTER II.

### SECOND PRACTICE: TO EXCITE OURSELVES BY PIOUS CONSIDERATION TO RECITE THE OFFICE WELL.\*

IT is important that the first words of the Office should be devoutly recited: for a work always reflects the dispositions that are brought to it; and if it be difficult not to relax somewhat, even when we have begun with fervour, how would it be if we began with negligence and distraction?

There can be nothing therefore more lamentable than to open the Breviary discontentedly and with regret:—*Ex tristitiâ aut ex necessitate.*† It should be taken up with a holy joy:—*Bono Animo*, as the Holy Ghost desires.‡ We must apply ourselves to it entirely, according to the saying of S. Augustine:—*Deum toti laudate.*§ We must recall all the powers of the soul, as did David: *Benedic anima me Domino et omnia quæ intra me sunt,*|| and say with the same truth and fervour as this holy

\* “Dignior enim sequetur effectus quem ferventior præcedit affectus.”—S. Aug., *Epist. ad Prob. 9.*

† *II. Cor. ix. 7.*

‡ “Bono animo gloriam redde Deo et non minuas primitias manuum tuarum.”—*Eccl. xxxv. 10.* “Gaudeamus in Domino, diem festum celebrantes.”—*Miss. Introit.*

§ *In Psalm cxlviii.*

|| *Psalm cii. 1.*

king : I am going to sing the praises of God ; I will sing them with my whole heart : *In toto corde meo*.\*

S. Collete, the reformer of the Poor Clares in the fifteenth century, was all her life an admirable model of this pious fervour. "Her joy burst forth," says her historian, "every time she heard the signal for the Divine Office.† Whatever anxiety she may have been troubled with up to then, her soul forthwith recovered its calm and serenity. She was never happier than when they were a long time in Choir. The delight that rejoiced her heart spread over her features and gave a radiant brightness to her face."

But how are we to excite ourselves to devotion in beginning the Divine Office ? By some reflections and thought upon the greatness of the act we are about to perform, upon the presence of God to Whom we are speaking, and upon the multitude of the saints who are praying with us in heaven and on earth.‡

(1.) There is nothing more helpful than the consideration of the excellence of the ministry which we hold. We should reflect, therefore, that we are about to present ourselves before God, as the mouthpiece of Jesus

\* David often expresses this desire, and on each occasion he gives a fresh motive for so doing. (1) The wonders of Divine power—*Confitebor tibi in toto corde meo ; narrabo omnia mirabilia tua*.—Ps. xcii. (2) The goodness of the Lord towards him—*Confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meo quoniam audisti verba oris mei*.—Ps. cxxxvii. (3) The sight of the saints who excite him by their example—*Confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meo in consilio justorum et congregatione*.—Ps. cx. (4) The infinite perfection of God—*Voluntarie sacrificabo tibi et confitebor nomini tuo quoniam bonum est*.—Ps. liii.

† Steph. Juliacus, *Acta sanctorum*, 6 Mart, c. xxiii.

‡ Here we had called attention to the *Treatise on public prayer* of Duguet, warning the reader of the Jansenistal spirit of the author ; we desire to add that it has been condemned and placed in the list of prohibited books. See, then, rather, Molina—*Instruction des Pretres. Addition au III<sup>e</sup> Traité*.

Christ, and representative of the Church ; that by this double title we are charged with the conduct of the most sublime affairs and interests ; that we have a commission and authority to repair all the offences of which the Sovereign Majesty is the object, and to obtain from His goodness all those graces of conversion, of sanctification and of perseverance, which men so much need.

S. John Climacus speaks of a certain religious who could not think without being ravished at the thought of the honour which he enjoyed in having to celebrate the praises of God.\* “When the hour came,” says the saint, “he roused up all his faculties, and appealing to all his senses he would cry out—‘Come and let us adore the Lord ; let us rejoice greatly to sing His praises ; let us fall down before Him Who made us—*Venite exultemus Domino*’.”† Ought we not to say the same to ourselves. “Oh my soul—my heart—we have a great work to do—there is none more important or sublime. Let us quit, then, the thoughts and distractions of the world. You have not enough intelligence or love to worthily bless the Lord in the name of all His creatures. Betake yourselves apart like Abraham to the Mountain of Vision, where you should offer your sacrifice and remain alone in the presence of God. You will come down again too soon, alas ! to the vain cares and empty affections of earth.”‡

(2.) Another thought with which it is important to be imbued, is that of the presence of God and of His

\* *Scala paradisi ; gradus xviii. 9.*

† *Ps. xciv. 1.*

‡ This was the practice of S. Adhélard or Allard, who was a relative of Charlemagne and Abbot of Corbie.—*Life* by Paschasus Rathbertus, c. xix. *Act. Sanct. 2 Jan.*

greatness. Happy the man who has a deep sense of the infinite Majesty of God, and never forgets the thought of it! Happy he who is faithful to recall this thought each time he has a sacrifice of homage to render to Him! *Beatus vir qui in sapientia morabitur et in sensu cogitabit circumspectionem Dei.\** If we were never wanting in this, says S. John Chrysostom, if we were careful to raise up our eyes like Isaias towards the throne of the Sovereign Master, and consider that we stand before Him, and beneath His hand, could we possibly allow ourselves to run away after so many strange ideas and vain imaginations? Should we not be under a certain necessity of occupying ourselves with Him, and of honouring His greatness? † But, often it happens that we have scarcely the least idea of it. Even His name awakens us not; it is but one of those abstract terms that present to the mind only a vague, distant, and almost indifferent object. We are in the presence of God, we are addressing God, yet nothing seems less present to us than God; we are beneath His eye and are yet unconscious of His presence: *Mecum eras et tecum non eram* ‡—may we say with S. Augustine—*Videor et non video.* §

(3.) Whilst reawakening within us the thought of God and of His greatness, it is well, likewise, to consider that

\* *Eccl. xiv. 22.*

† Quod si omnis oraturus hanc sibi proponet Majestatem, orationes suas attentius, ferventius, et rectius funderet. Quis enim tamaudax et temerarius Deum præsentem cogitationis oculis prospiciens, alias cogitationes admitteret quam bonas et opportunas?—S. Chryst. *super verba Isaiæ: Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et plena erat omnis terra majestate ejus, vi. 1.*—*Item. S. Bernard de quatuor modis orandi.*

‡ *Conf. lx. 27.*

§ S. Bern. *Cant. Serm. xxxi.*

we are not alone in praising Him, but that a multitude of creatures in heaven and on earth are joined with us in this work.

*Concentum cæli quis dormire faciet?* says Job.\* Nothing can be grander than the sight of so many blessed spirits who surround the throne of God, and celebrate night and day His infinite Perfections. There are, according to the testimony of Daniel, innumerable legions—thousands of millions of them. *Millia millium ministrabant ei, et decies centena millia assistebant ei.*† “I have seen them, I have heard them myself,” says S. John; “they had but one voice to celebrate the Lamb, His merits and His virtues: *et Vidi et Audivi.*”‡ It is an immense concert without pause, without end:—*Clamabant voce magna dicentes; Salus Deo nostro.*§ To these heavenly chants, hymns of praise and unceasing benedictions reply on earth. The Church beginning during time, that which will be Her occupation for eternity! Wherever there be reasonable and holy creatures, the Supreme Majesty receives from them at every moment the tribute of prayer and praise:—*Et omnem creaturam quæ in cælo est et super terram, omnes audivi dicentes: Sedenti in throno et Agno, benedictio, et honor, et gloria, et potestas in sæcula sæculorum.*”||

It is not only a happiness for the faithful soul to behold her God blessed and glorified by the whole universe, it is likewise an encouragement to her and a support. Were she to find herself alone, in presence of this Infinite God, charged to offer to His greatness the worship

\* Job xxxviii. 7.

† Dan. vii. 10.

See S. Bernard, *Epist. lxxxviii. 6.*

‡ Apoc. v. 2.

§ Apoc. vii. 10.

|| Apoc. v. 13.



He merits, she would find herself overburthened, as it were, with such a duty, and absorbed in the thought of her vileness. But, the spectacle of so many holy souls, and of so many celestial spirits applying themselves with all their strength to this august occupation, excites her emulation, animates her confidence, and sustains her efforts.\* It is true, she says, I am nothing before Thee, oh my God ; I am unworthy to attract Thy notice, not knowing as I ought, how to pronounce Thy Holy Name. But my prayer is not by itself ; it is united to the worship of all Thy creatures, and to the praises offered to Thee by all the members of Thy Church :—*Apud te laus mea in Ecclesia magna.*† It is but one voice—but it is a voice the more in an immense concert ; it is but a wave, but it is one that joined to countless others, increases *that large and powerful stream which makes glad the city of God.*‡ United with my whole soul to the company of Thy children and faithful servants, I trust to obtain a share in their merits, and to behold Thee extend even to me the favour with which Thou honourest them :—*Confiteantur tibi omnia opera tua Domine.*§ . . . *Particeps ego sum omnium timentium te.*||

It is natural to enter into these sentiments more particularly when the Divine Office is recited in choir or

\* “Oratio quæ non est comprecatores naeta multi est se ipsa languidior et debilior.”—S. Basil, *Ep. lxxviii.*

† *Psalm xxi. 26.* In order to excite himself to sing the praises of God, the Psalmist loves to fancy himself in the midst of the Church in the centre of a numerous people, in an immense assembly, of which he is himself the soul :—*Confitebor tibi in Ecclesia magna.*—Ps. xxxix. 10. *In ecclesia Sanctorum.*—Ps. lxxxviii. and cxlix. Such also is the sight that the Church places before the eyes of the priest, when at the altar he begins the prayers of the Canon :—*Et ideo cum angelis et archangelis, etc.*

‡ *Ps. xlv. 5.*

§ *Ps. cxliv. 10.*

|| *Ps. cxviii. 63.*

with others. We knew a pious soul, living near a house of fervent religious, who hearing them at night singing the praises of God could not prevent himself from rising out of bed to unite his prayer to theirs ; and S. Frances de Sales assures us it was one of his most soothing consolations to go and recite the Office among those communities in which it seemed to him God was worthily honoured.\* But, if in solitude it is enough to draw near in thought to those whom distance separates from us, to allow imagination to supply in a certain manner for the reality.† The very form of the Church prayers naturally suggests this practice ; and this is doubtless the reason why She does not modify the words for private recitation. Far from feeling surprise at this, as some have done, there is rather ground for admiring Her wisdom ; and it is fitting in us to enter into Her intentions when blessing the Lord in a spirit of union, charity, and holy fervour.‡

\* Hamon. *Vie de S. Francois de Sales*, I. 1, c. iii.

† "Attende Carthusienses, Cistercienses, et diversæ religionis Monachos et moniales qualiter omni nocte ad psallendum Domino assurgent. Ideo turpe esset in tam sancto opere pigritare ubi tanta multitudo religiosorum incipit Deo jubilaré."—*Imit. Christ. lib. 1, c. xxv.*

‡ See, at greater length, motives for saying well the Divine Office in *Navarre de Oratione*, xcvi., xcix., c.

## CHAPTER III.

### THIRD PRACTICE : TO UNITE OURSELVES TO JESUS CHRIST AS OUR HEAD.\*

EVERY Christian is united to Jesus Christ by virtue of Holy Baptism, which renders him one of His members, and associates him with His life and spirit. That fact is for him the source of every virtue, of every merit, and every supernatural good.† But since man has free-will, he is able to renounce this union, and he is also capable of drawing its bonds closer, and of rendering it fruitful by his voluntary consideration.

It is for this motive that spiritual writers so often recommend us to unite ourselves in all our works to our Lord—that is, to renounce our own actions, our purely personal views, our natural or disordered inclinations, in order that we may suffer ourselves to be enlightened, guided, and moved by the spirit of Jesus

\* Upon this subject it would be well to consult the *Catechisme chretienne pour la vie interieure de M. Olier*. In the first part, *Lec. xx<sup>a</sup>, xxv.*, and in the course of the second treating of the Mysteries of our Saviour and of prayer, there will be found laid down principles which throw considerable light upon the spirit that has presided over the editing of the Office, and which ought to animate those who recite it.

† “Ego sum vitis vos palmites. Manete in me, et ego in vobis. Qui manet in me et ego in eo hic fert fructum multum ; quia sine me nihil potestis facere. Se manseritis in me et verba mea in vobis manserint quodcumque volueritis, petetis et fiet vobis.”—*Joan. xv. 4, 5.*

Christ our Divine Head.\* Now this union is never more necessary to us, and never have we greater advantages to expect from it, than when we appear before His Father to fulfil in His name and in that of His Church, the great duty—the supernatural duty of Public Prayer.

In fact, it is not simply performing a passing act of virtue or asking a favour for ourselves or for our brethren ; it is not merely continuing here below the worship that Jesus Christ has rendered to the Supreme Majesty ; it is actually the offering to God the *same* homage, the *same* worship, the *same* thanksgiving which Our Lord offered to the Eternal King—it is to enter into the dispositions of Jesus Christ, and to repeat, in a language inspired by the Holy Ghost, the expression of His sentiments with regard to everything. Who is there but must feel that, to discharge worthily such a ministry—quite another spirit than ours, and other lights than our imperfect and limited ideas, are required? And since the Holy Ghost dwells in our soul as He dwells in the soul of our Lord,† since He is within us, though undoubtedly in a less measure, but with the same reality, the same virtue, and the same aspiration,‡ we must clearly see that it is our duty to submit ourselves to Him, and allow ourselves to be guided, enlightened, and directed by Him—and that the more we cause Him to

\* “Hoc sentite in vobis quod est in Christo Jesu.”—*Philip. ii. 5.* “Si quis Spiritum Christi non habet, hic non est ejus.”—*Rom. viii. 9.*

† “Quod est spiritus noster, id est anima nostra ad membra nostra, hoc est Spiritus Sanctus ad membra Christi, ad corpus Christi quod est Ecclesia.”—*S. Aug. Tract. xxvi. in Joan.*

‡ “Quoniam estis filii misit Deus Spiritum Filii sui in corda vestra clamantem : Abba Pater.”—*Gal. iv. 6.* “Participes enim Christi effecti sumus si tamen initium substantiæ ejus in nobis usque in finem firmum retineamus.”—*Hebr. iii. 14.*

reign over us, the purer will be the homage we render to God, the holier too, and the more conformable to the spirit of the Church and to the external testimony we bear it.

If it be necessary to be united to Jesus Christ, in order to pay a worthy homage to God, it is not less essential to keep our mind fixed upon this union, if we would understand the prayers prescribed to us by the Church.

As we have observed, Jesus Christ is the great Adorer, and according to M. Olier's expression, the sole *Religious* of His Father. He alone has the perfection necessary to glorify the majesty of God—to disarm His justice—to merit His benefits. He alone honours and praises Him worthily. Thus our Divine Head resumes then, in His heart, the homage and vows of all His members. There is not a true prayer, not a sentiment of real value, which He was not the first to conceive, which He does not actually still carry in His soul, and which He does not contribute by His spirit to form in His members : so that all who are born again in Jesus Christ have but one supernatural life in Him, as also they form but one body with Him : and we must say of our Lord in the order of grace, what the Apostle says of His Father in the order of nature :—*In Ipso vivimus et movemur et sumus.\**

All the members sharing in the spirit of their Head, the action of the Man-God becomes universal ; so is it also with His prayer. Jesus Christ prays not for Himself only and in Himself only ; he prays in all His members and for all His members :—*Ego pro iis rogo,* says he, *Rogo pro iis qui credituri sunt in me.†* If He

\* *Acts xvii. 28.*

† *Joan. xvii. 9, 20.*

prays for Himself and in Himself, it is as if united to them in the same interest and same sentiment with them. Now, the prayer of the Church, the Divine Office, is the sensible expression of the prayer of our Lord, in Himself and in His members. We must look, therefore, to find in it the same character of universality and of diversity that befit His sentiments. There we hear at times every accent ; cries of distress and repentance of sinners, whose iniquities He has taken upon Himself—songs of triumph for the just, whom His grace has delivered from slavery and joined to His Kingdom—allusions to the sufferings, labours, and diverse phases of His earthly life—revelations of His greatness and of His glory in heaven. Here He must humble Himself under contempt, and accept scorn and contempt, there He must proclaim His innocence—demand justice—make His enemies fear the severity of His vengeance ; in another place He has to give thanks to God—to leap with joy, and sing hymns of gladness. In this way the variety of sentiments, and seeming contradictions which give the most striking feature to the Psalms, are easily explained when we view them in this manner ; when we consider Jesus Christ in all His extension, in His personal unity and moral multiplicity ; when we see His spirit spread itself and act upon all His members, and all His members reuniting and identifying themselves with Him. We understand the reason of it, and see its necessity. *Non dicit quasi in uno, sed quasi in multis qui est Christus.\** But what is just

\* *I. Galat. iii. 16.* Vos estis corpus Christi et membra de membro. Sicut corpus unum est et membra habet multa, ita et Christus. Etenim in uno spiritu omnes nos in unum corpus baptizati sumus et omnes in eodem spiritu



and natural on the part of our Lord, would be inexplicable in any one else. Many of the prayers which the Church puts in the lips of Her ministers would be nonsense or impiety, were they only to be understood of Her ministers themselves, if they were only pronounced by them in their own name, and were they not the echoes before God of a more distinguished voice—the mouthpiece of Him Who is both Man and God, and Who as such, is not only an Adorer of unequalled dignity and Mediator between heaven and earth, but moreover, the Representative of regenerated human nature, Interpreter and High Priest of the whole creation :—*Catholicus Patris Sacerdos*.\*

Here, then, is the function of the priest reciting the Divine Office. He is, if we may say so, another Jesus Christ, who, in virtue of the Holy Ghost whose mouthpiece he becomes, reproduces, perpetuates, and multiplies, in language authorised by the Church, and often inspired by God, the homage of respect, of praise, of supplication, and of thanksgiving which our Lord paid to His Father during the course of His mortal life, and

potati sumus.—*I. Cor. xiv.* S. Augustine, in his *Homilies on the Psalms*, recalls every moment the foundation of our incorporation with Jesus Christ, and it is thus that he reconciles in His person passages seemingly the most contradictory. “Let us always remember,” says he, “that Jesus Christ is our Head, and that we are His members. Forming together but one body, is it not natural that we should have but one heart, and one and the same voice, and that the thought and cry of One only should be the cry and sentiment of all.” *Sic clamat unus tanquam omnes, quia omnes in uno unus sunt.*—in *Psalm lxix. 61.* *Dicimus cum illo et dicit nobis cum ; dicimus in illo, et dicit in nobis.*—in *Psalm lxxxv. 1.* Thus, from this spiritual union of our Saviour with His members, there results a kind of communication of idioms analogous to that which is founded upon the hypostatic union of the Word with human nature in the Incarnation.

\* Fertul. *Contr. Marc. l. iv., c. xcxi.*

which He continues to render in heaven, and in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. The worthy fulfilment of such a duty demands evidently the most intimate union between the Man-God and His minister ; or rather a certain identity of mind, thought and affections, allowing the latter to say with the Apostle :—" I pray but in truth it is not I myself who pray, but Jesus Christ Who prays in me ; it is His spirit, His virtue, His grace, that gives all its worth and all its merit to my prayer ".

Thus Jesus Christ is all things to us. He is our praise and our prayer, as He is our life.\* Not only does He pray for us as our Pontiff High Priest, says S. Augustine, but, further, He prays in us as our Head, and penetrating us with His sentiments, He associates our hearts with all the homage He pays to His Father. As the flame touching the wick of a taper consumes its every thread in the same light and in the same fire, so likewise our Lord's spirit spread through the Church, enlightens every soul with the splendour of the one same Faith, and consumes it with the ardour of the same charity :—*Facit ministros suos flammam ignis.*†

We ought now, by this time, to be able to understand the reasons and importance of the practice we are here recommending : there is none more efficacious nor more conformable to the spirit of the Holy Church.

The Church does not make a single petition to God, but in union with Jesus Christ, nor without protesting that She reckons upon His help and hopes in His mediation :—*Per Christum Dominum nostrum.* And as it is by Jesus Christ that She presents Her supplications, it is

\* " Laus mea tu es."—*Jerem. xvii. 14.* " Christus vita nostra."—*Col. iii. 3.*

† *Psalms ciii. 4 ; Hebr. i. 7.*

through Him also that She offers Her praise and thanksgiving. It is by Him, She says, Whom the angels and saints adore :—*Per Quem laudant Angeli*. It is by Him, with Him, and in Him—*per Ipsum, cum Ipso et in Ipso*—that all honour and all glory should be given to the Supreme Majesty ; and to Him ought to be literally applied the words of the Psalmist :—*Adorabunt de Ipso semper ; tota die benedicent ei*.\*

We read in the life of S. Gertrude, that our Lord had recommended her to thus unite herself to His spirit in all her prayers. One day, when, in spite of her efforts, she had been more than ordinarily distracted, she became miserable, saying :—"Of what avail then before God can such excesses be? What fruit can they bear?" Our Lord condescended to appear to her and say :—"My daughter, behold My heart ; look upon it in future as supplying for your own defects. When you would pray, ask It to help you to give to My Father the homage you owe Him. I shall be ever ready to second you as soon as you call Me to your aid."

S. Bernard, schooled in this practice by the Holy Ghost, knew all its sweetness :—"David," he says, "rejoiced of old, to have found his heart to pray to his Master and to his God :—*Invenit servus tuus cor suum ut oraret te oratione hac*."† And I, that I may pray, have found the heart of my King, of my Brother, of my sweet Saviour ; shall I not, then, also pray? Yes, certainly, for I am too happy, as I have, if not the heart of Jesus in place of mine, at least have I mine in that of Jesus :—*Ego cum Jesu, cor meum habes*."‡

\* *Psalm lxxi. 15. De ipso* for *per ipsum* according to interpreters who refer this word to our Saviour. See Bossuet, *Dern. Medit. sur l'Evangile*.

† *II. Reg. vii. 27.*

‡ *Inter. Opp. Vitis mystica, iii. 9.*

"The spirit of our Lord," says M. Olier, "is like a river that flows into the vast bosom of His Father, and draws with it everything it meets in the rapidity of its course. It suffices that we give ourselves to Him, and adhere to His movements, by the desires of our heart; He will then carry us along with Himself into the abyss of the Divinity, to be absorbed therein for ever."

Then, let us say with the Apostle, that it shall ever be in union with the Lord, by Him, with Him, and in Him, that we will render to the Eternal Father the homage of the Divine Office—that sacrifice of praise of which we are the ministers:—*Per ipsum ergo offeramus hostiam laudis semper Deo, id est fructum labiorum confitentium nomini ejus.\** Let then this union be not only implicit and habitual; let it be, as much as possible, actual, voluntary, and effectual. In order to animate our confidence, let us love, like S. Teresa, to represent to ourselves our Lord saying to us, as He did to His apostles—"Behold how you should pray:—*Sic orabitis patrem.*"† Then, as if He were the first to pronounce the words we have to recite. In these words we should see but the expression of His thoughts, and should say after Him:—*Verba quæ ego loquor a meipso non loquor.‡*

\* *Hebr. xiii. 15.*

† *Matt. vi. 9. The Way of Perfection, chap. xxv.* We read in the life of many a saint that, in order to induce them to follow this practice, our Saviour deigned to appear in a sensible manner to them, and to unite His voice to theirs in the recital of the Divine Office. See S. Peter Celestin, *Act. Sanct., 19 Maii.* Also S. Catherine of Sienna—her life by Raymond, her confessor, c. xxv. Likewise her life recently edited by Sister Raphael of the Dominican House, Stone, Stafford. Also the Ven. Agnes de Jesus—when she prepared to say the Office, she would say in a loving manner to our Lord:—"Begin, if you please, my spouse."—*Vie par M. de Lantage, p. 1, c. x.*

‡ *Joan. xiv. 10.*

Let us forget David and the accidental circumstances that caused him to write his sacred canticles. It was well to attend to the symbol when the reality was not to be had. It was a solace to the Jews to see in the history of their ancestors, some image of Him Who had been promised to them ; but for us who have this Divine Example before us, who are better acquainted with His life and mysteries, than with His types and emblems, what advantage would it be if we entangled ourselves in seeking out all these shadows? We must abandon types when truth unfolds itself :—*Cum venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est.*\* Rather, let us contemplate the Son of God upon the altar in heaven, where the Beloved Disciple beheld Him—or before His Father's throne as He showed Himself to S. Stephen—or in our tabernacles which contain Him as really as do the heavens, offering incessantly to the Supreme Majesty the same homage which He presented at the moment of the Incarnation : and at the same time that He offers it in His inmost soul, offering it to Him equally by the hearts of so many of the elect who are for ever united to Him, and by the lips of a multitude of holy priests, praying under the direct and incessant influence of His Divine Spirit. . . . Let us dwell upon the thought that, notwithstanding our unworthiness, our voice participates in this divine concert, and that God hears our prayers as He does that of all His children; because in these so apparently diverse accents, He recognises only one voice—the voice of His only Son in Whom He is ever well pleased, and Who

\* *I. Cor. xiii. 10.*

has the right to invoke Him as His Father :—*Spiritus Filii sui clamantem : Abba, Pater.* \*

In this way, uniting ourselves to our Lord we shall partake in all His prayers ; we shall enrich ourselves also with all His virtues :—*Recte novit vivere*, says S. Augustine, *qui recte novit orare*. There is no better earnest of a Christian life than this habit of prayer with self-renunciation and yielding to the spirit of our Lord. When we can truly say :—" I pray, but it is not I who pray, but Jesus Christ Who prays in me," we are not far from being capable of saying :—" I live, but it is not I who live ; it is Jesus Christ Who lives in me ; it is He Who is the mainspring of all my thoughts, of all my designs and of all my works." †

\* *Rom. viii. 15.*

† *Galat. ii. 20. Philipp. i. 20.*



## CHAPTER IV.

### FOURTH PRACTICE: ALWAYS TO HAVE A PARTICULAR INTENTION.

IN uniting ourselves to our Lord, and yielding up ourselves to His spirit, we necessarily join ourselves to all His intentions. The Office, then, when recited in His name, cannot but be profitable to all His members. But, whatever portion of the prayers of Her ministers goes to the Church, there remains for them besides a personal merit, certain fruits of impetration and satisfaction of which they may dispose as they judge proper, and which it is lawful for them to offer to God as they do any other suffrage.\* From this consideration arises the case of special intentions which by specifying as it were in the mind the effects of those graces, greatly excite our attention and increase our fervour. Spiritual writers recommend us not to neglect this aid, but rather to have recourse to it habitually when it is a question of long and frequent prayers, as in the Breviary, when we are always the more exposed to negligence.† What, then, are the particular ends to which it is right to apply the fruit of the Office?

\* The Council of Constance and Martin V. (1418) condemned the following propositions of John Huss:—*Speciales orationes applicatæ unæ personæ per prælotos vel religiosos non plus prosunt eidem quam generales, cæteris paribus*.—Prop. xix.

† “Causam laboris cogitate in labore,” said S. Bernard to his religious. S. Bonaventure said the same to Priests, “Apponite diligentiam magnam in signis, majorem in verbis, maximam in intentione”.—*De præp. ad Missam*.

A fervent and zealous pastor scarcely requires that we should suggest any to him : he will find but too many in the delicate and embarrassing engagements which his ministry constantly supplies. Sometimes it is a difficult conversion to procure from heaven. We say to God, as did that child of Israel :—*Si tibi placet, dona mihi animam pro qua rogo, et populum meum pro quo obsecro.\** At another time it is an important instruction of which we are anxious to secure the benefit. Then we feel, like S. Augustine, that we must speak to the Master of hearts before we apply to men,† and we need to obtain for our hearers the resolutions we wish to ask of them :—*Quod peto a vobis, rogo det vobis.‡* Sometimes it is a difficult question to be decided, or a doubtful step to be taken. We then recall the example of S. Peter, enlightened from above, about the vocation of the Gentiles, at the moment he was offering to God the tribute of his prayers :—*Dum oraret circa horam sextam.§* At other times we are shocked at certain scandals, we are touched at the thought of the peril to which our flock is exposed, and we say to ourselves, as did Job :—*Ne forte peccaverint filii mei in cordibus suis. ||*

Or, it may be, we learn that a great calamity, a per-

\* *Esth. vii. 3.* Quis scit si forte donet eum mihi Dominus et vivat infans ?  
*II. Reg. xii. 22.*

† “ Pietate magis orationum, quam orationum facultate indiget ut orando pro se et pro aliis quis est allocaturus sit orator antequam doctor.”—S. Aug., *De doct. Christ. l. iv. c. xv.*

‡ *Tract. xxxii. in Joan.* Novit ipse qui scrutatur corda quoties in corde meo propriæ solitudini præponderat sollicitudo vestra.—S. Bernard., *Serm. v. in Quadrages.*

§ *Act x.* From which S. Aug. draws this consequence which experience confirms :—*Oratione melius solvuntur dubia quam inquisitione alia.*

|| *Job. i. 5.*

secution, for example, devastates a portion of God's kingdom ; and we are reminded of the High Priest of the Old Law, who never entered the sanctuary without having on his heart and before his eyes, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.\* We feel obliged to observe that advice of the Apostle which we ought to repeat to the faithful :—*Mementote victorum, tanquam simul vincti.*† These particular ends, these entirely spontaneous intentions which grow out of circumstances, or rather, which the breath of God inspires, as it passes over His fervent Ministers, are always the best and the most efficacious ; from a source of distraction they become a means of recollection of spirit and a help to praying well.

It is well then to give these the chief place at Office as well as at Mass. But in order to supply for their absence, it is useful to have a certain number of intentions arranged and disposed in such a manner as to recall according to the days and hours the principal objects in which we feel interested.

There are priests who make it a rule to refer to the Holy Sacrifice all their practices of piety, particularly the recitation of the Office. Thus they will say Matins and Lauds with the intention of preparing themselves for Mass, and to obtain aid to celebrate It well ; the Little Hours that they may unite themselves to the Heavenly Victim, and like It, consecrate themselves to the will of God ; Vespers and Complin to thank our Lord for the honour He has done them, and to beg of Him that they may not become unworthy of It.

Others again regarding the prayers of the Divine Office as the expression of the sentiments that animate

\* *Exod. xxviii. 29.*

† *Hebr. xiii. 3.*

Jesus Christ on the altar, offer these prayers to God for the four ends of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and unite themselves to the acts of adoration, thanksgiving, of satisfaction and impetration, by which this Divine Saviour fulfils His functions of Priest and Victim.

Many like to harmonise their intentions with the object of their meditation. Thus, on the feasts of our Lord after having meditated upon the mystery to be celebrated, they beg of God in their Office the grace attached to this mystery and give special attention to the words referring to it. In the same way on the saints' days, they unite themselves to the saint or rather to the Spirit of God dwelling in him, to praise the Heavenly Father ; they strive to enter into his feeling, and ask for themselves and for their brethren those virtues of which he was the special model.\*

Many have tables that assign to each of the canonical hours, or to each day of the week, some special favour to be prayed for.†

\* Olier, *Catechisme chretien pour la vie interieure*, p. 1, c. xx. On the feast of S. Benedict, 21st March, 1643, I saw that this great saint had been given to the Church to renew in her the spirit of religion ; and I felt myself obliged to pray to him that it would please him to spread this spirit among the clergy as well as in monasteries. I always behold this great saint as he was on earth—kneeling with the Psalter in his hand. This was his ordinary occupation. And upon this point I have understood the 1st Psalm, *Beatus vir*, as applicable to him :—" Hæc est via qua dilectus Domini Benedictus in cælum ascendit."—*Lect. vi.*, S. Bened. *Memoires*, t. iii. 572.

† Here is an example gathered from the writings of a young ecclesiastic.

" Unless I make a special exception, I will say my Office each day of the week, with the following intentions :—

" I. *Sunday*. I will thank God for all He has done for the salvation of men ; and I will ask for the triumph of His grace in every soul and in my own in particular.

" II. *Monday*. I will specially recommend to Him all for whom I have a personal obligation ; my relations, my benefactors, my superiors, those who

They are :—

(1.) The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost ; the gifts of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Knowledge, of Counsel, so important for the instruction of our neighbour ; next, the gifts of Piety, Fortitude, Fear of God, necessary for our own salvation, whilst labouring for the salvation of others.

(2.) The fruits of Grace attached by our Lord to the seven Sacraments instituted for the sanctification of the faithful.

(3.) The three theological virtues—Faith, Hope, Charity, joined to the four great moral virtues—Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance.

(4.) Victory over the seven capital sins, source of all our faults and of all our misfortunes.

They ask for these graces for themselves, for the souls

have recommended themselves to me—the souls with whose interests I shall one day be entrusted.

“ III. *Tuesday*. I will pray for missionaries, and for the propagation of the Faith in infidel countries.

“ IV. *Wednesday*. For the conversion of sinners ; that is to say, for apostates, heretics, schismatics, and for Catholics in mortal sin.

“ V. *Thursday*. I will beg of God to increase the number of holy priests, and to give to all the ministers of the Church a great devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament.

“ VI. *Friday*. I will offer up my office for the suffering members of our Lord, specially for the persecuted, for the sick who are in danger of death, and for the souls in purgatory.

“ VII. *Saturday*. I will unite myself in spirit with the Blessed Virgin to thank the Lord for the graces which He has heaped upon Her, and I will ask that devotion to Her may spread more and more throughout the Church.

“ I will take care to recall to mind every morning before God the intention with which I should recite the office of the day.”

We have no wish to exaggerate the importance of these tables. They are only plans, distant projects. They could not supply for the spirit of prayer, but they suppose it and serve to promote it. That suffices for their recommendation.



committed to their care, and for all the members of the Church.

Here already we have a number of intentions sufficiently important to arouse us from our sloth, and sufficiently varied to prevent routine. To these particular views of a more limited interest the ecclesiastic who has the spirit of his vocation, will not fail to join others in favour of the Church and of all that is dear to him : Her Head, Her ministers, Her institutions, all the works She protects, all the orders She includes. . . .

The following remark is made in the Life of the venerable Holzhauser, founder, in the seventeenth century, of the institution of Clerks-regular in Germany. This holy ecclesiastic brought in his prayers the whole world before God, as by charity he embraced it in his heart. In casting our eye over the *Recueil des exercices de piete et des prieres*, which he established in his society, we find there was no day on which, independently of their personal intentions, he and his priests did not pray for the entire Church, for the Sovereign Pontiff, for the bishops, for all the clergy ; for the conversion of infidels, heretics, and sinners ; for Christian youth, and for every state ; for princes and secular magistrates ; for peace among the powers, for the souls in purgatory, etc.\*

Nothing can be more priestly than such a practice. Of course it is not essential that our zeal should be employed upon everything that may become the object of it ; nevertheless, the more ardent it is the more it tends to expansion.†

\* M. Gaduel, *vie du Ven Barthelemy Holzhauser*, l. x., c. vii.

† “Portabit Aaron nomina filiorum Israel coram Domino super pectus suum quando ingreditur sanctuarium.”—*Exod. xxviii. 29.* “Est Aaron figura Christi et illius sacerdotii.”—S. Cyr. Alex., *de Adorat in sper*, i. 11.



There will always be found in the Church generous souls among the clergy, who are consumed with love for Her, who feel for all Her sufferings, who are moved by every danger that threatens Her, and who, unable to hasten to Her aid like S. Paul wherever She is in peril, would desire to say with that apostle, that their soul is in every place at once, and that there is not one of their brethren for whose salvation they would not strive to labour.\* One mode of exercising and satisfying in a certain measure their charity, is to pray in turn for the different countries of Christendom. They divide them into seven classes, and they take, at each hour of the day or each day of the week, one of these divisions as the special object of their intentions. These divisions are indicated in many pious books with considerations most proper to recommend their use. Many ecclesiastics have experienced the advantages which can be derived from this practice.†

If we cannot undertake this practice, can we not at least cultivate the habit of specially recommending to God the spiritual wants of certain countries, of certain

\* "Ego ora pro tota ecclesia Catholica ab oriente usque ad occidentum diffusa. Si Tu vis ut pro te orem, noli recedere ab ea pro qua oro."—S. Aug., *Serm. ci., de div.*

† Of the thousand millions at least of men on earth, there are more than seven hundred millions to whom Jesus Christ is utterly unknown; and of the three hundred and fifty millions who do not entirely ignore Him—one half nearly are outside the true Church, and can have but a feeble share of its graces. Is it possible to reflect upon this state of things without striving to remedy it, at least by prayer? *Qui videret fratrem suum necessitatem habere et clausurit viscera sua ab eo, quomodo caritas Dei manet in eo?*—I. Joan. iii. 17. In order to incessantly think of this, and to pray more fervently for the propagation of the faith, a certain pious priest always had a map of the world spread out before his eyes at the foot of his crucifix.—See P. Ramiere, *L'Apostolate de la priere*, 12mo.

societies, of certain works on those feasts when is kept the office of the saints who have been their most illustrious apostles, patrons, founders or members? Thus on the feasts of the Sovereign Pontiffs, we might pray for the Apostolic See and Roman Church ; on those of saints proper to the diocese, for the Ordinary of the place, and for the parishes where those saints have passed their lives. For France, we might pray on the feasts of S. Michael the Archangel, S. Louis, King, S. Clotilda, etc. ; for England, on the feasts of S. Gregory, Pope, S. Augustine of Canterbury, S. Edward, S. Thomas of Canterbury, etc. ; for Germany, on those of S. Boniface and S. Henry ; for Spain and Portugal, on S. Ferdinand and S. Elizabeth's feasts ; for Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Sweden, the feasts of S. Patrick, S. Casimir, S. Stephen, S. Wenceslaus, S. Bridget. For Africa we might pray on the feasts of S. Augustine and S. Cyprian, etc. ; and for the East, on the feast of S. Chrysostom, S. Basil, S. Gregory of Nazianzum ; for all missions, on those of S. Francis Xavier and S. Peter Claver, etc. At the same time we should invoke the grace of heaven upon each of the religious orders or institutes, Benedictines, Preachers, Franciscans, Jesuits, Augustinians, Passionists, Oblates, Poor Clares, Carmelites, Sisters of Charity, etc., whilst reciting the office of their patrons or founders, S. Benedict, S. Dominic, S. Francis of Assisium, S. Ignatius, S. Augustine, S. Paul of the Cross, S. Charles, S. Clare, S. Teresa, S. Vincent of Paul, etc. We should pray to God to maintain in their societies the virtues of these saints ; and thus by uniting ourselves to their spirit we should become associated to their work and be made partakers of their merits.

Lastly, we would note another practice, a familiar one. We know many priests who think much of their last end, and make this a special object in prayer.

Some think specially of the dead. They never tire of offering up their prayers to God for the souls in purgatory ; for certain souls in particular ; for those of their friends, benefactors, parishioners, penitents, those for whom they are charged to pray, or whom they think they did not help enough whilst on earth.

Others again are more concerned for the wants of the dying. They reflect that at each moment a soul quits this world to appear before the tribunal of God, and that its salvation may often depend upon a single grace—one good thought on a good impression received at the last instant of life. So, they see nothing more pressing than to beg for the gift of a good death for those in their last agony.

Amid so many intentions each may choose freely, according to his inclination ; but it would seem that those of widest application are those which accord the best with the inspirations of pastoral zeal and the purpose of the Divine Office.\* The more we ask of God, the more we obtain from Him. So likewise the more

\* "Credamus fratres ; quantum quisque amat Ecclesiam Christi tantum, habet Spiritus Sancti."—S. Aug., *Tract. xxxii. in Joan.* "Oh, priest !" said M. Olier, "if thy vocation is apostolic, it looks upon the entire world as its field. As pastor, thy obligations are restricted—as priest they have no limits. Thou art priest of the Universal Church, thou shouldst then embrace all Her interests—sensible to all Her dangers, and pray for all Her wants. Oh, priestly soul ! where can be such a wide world zeal—a bursting forth of charity—such as there should be ! . . . Oh ! how few priests there are. And how confounded I feel in writing what I have to write, being myself so wretched and so far from that state of perfection to which the divine priesthood calls me !"—*Memoires, t. iv. p. 420.*

extended the action of our zeal, the more it grows in the soul and produces fruit abroad.

We read in the Acts of S. Stephen, the young patriarch of Constantinople in the eighth century, that having been driven from his see by Constantine Copronymus, and confined in an island of Propontis, he did not consider himself dispensed, on that account, from helping his brethren, and that from his prison he ceased not to intercede with God in their behalf. Surrounded on all sides by the waves of the sea, he was particularly touched at the sight of the dangers incurred by sailors on stormy days. When he heard the howling of the storm, "Oh, my God," said he, "how many are there now struggling with death, whilst we are enjoying security and rest!" Then falling on his knees, he conjured Him Whom the winds and waves obey, to save the mariners exposed to shipwreck. And God was pleased to manifest, in the most touching way, how agreeable to Him was this charitable exercise, and what power these prayers had in His eyes:—"Often after the storms," says the author of his "Acts,"\* "the holy patriarch had the joy of seeing sailors come ashore on his island, as if by some miraculous instinct, to thank him as their guardian angel, affirming that they had seen him during the danger holding the rudder and steer their ship towards the port."

This is a sensible image of the services that a priest renders to the souls of his brethren, in fulfilling with fervour his office of prayer and supplication! Sooner

\* Written by Stephen, Deacon of Constantinople—see *Vie des Saints*, of P. Giry, 28th November. Cf. Life of Ethelwold, Solitary, of Lindisfarne, in *The Ecclesiastical History of England*, of Ven. Bede, i. v., c. i.

or later he too will have the happiness of seeing that he has not prayed in vain.\* When he enters heaven he will gather the fruit of his benedictions, and when he sees coming to meet him all those souls whom he had helped on earth, he will hear the elect say of him as was said of the ancient prophet :—*Hic est fratrum amator et populi ; multum orans pro populo et universa sancta civitate.*†

\* “Orantes tanquam seminantes non deficiamus ; tempore enim proprio metemus.”—S. Aug., *Tract. lxxiii.*, in *Joan.* ; cf. *Act. xxvii.* 23.

† *II. Mach. xv.* 13.

## CHAPTER V.

### FIFTH PRACTICE : APPLICATION OF HEART AND MIND TO THE WORDS PRONOUNCED.

IN order to perform the Divine Office, it is not necessary to have in mind the precise sense of the prayers we pronounce. The texts are sometimes difficult to understand and the attention is not always under control of the will. Besides the mind may exercise itself upon other suitable objects. Yet, speaking in general, we cannot fix our attention too much upon the sense of the words :—*Qui legit intelligat*.<sup>\*</sup> This is the most natural occupation, and also the most conformable to the spirit of the Church and to the example of the saints.

In fact, what more natural when we address ourselves to God to bless Him, or when we utter before Him certain forms of prayer, than to be attentive to the words we pronounce, and to join to the letter the thoughts and affections it expresses. To neglect this source of inspiration, in order to seek elsewhere sentiments and ideas, is it not, as it were, doing violence to the mind in imposing upon it, in a needless manner, a double labour, and rendering it impossible for it to perform either in a proper manner ? Moreover, to do so would be to lower

<sup>\*</sup> *Matth. xxiv. 15.* “Docet et admonet nos spiritus sanctus ut psallamus *intelligenter* ne quæramus sonum aures sed lumen cordis.”—S. Aug., *in verb. Psalliti sapienter, Ps. xlvii. 8.*



the dignity of the Divine Office and misunderstand its object. For most certainly the Church has not put forth this book but with a purpose worthy of Her wisdom: and indeed, what can She propose to Herself in putting Her words on our lips, if it be not to put Her thoughts into our minds and Her sentiments into our hearts?

We may here notice the example of all the saints of the Church. However enlightened they may have been, whatever inclination they may have had for prayer and contemplation, they made a rule not to address Almighty God but *with understanding*; they scarcely admitted that there was any mean between mental application to the words of the Office and mental wandering. The example and practice of the most fervent religious might also be cited:—"When you recite the Divine Office," says S. Bernard to the monks of Clairvaux, "think of what you are saying to God. Do not let your minds run upon other things."\* "As far as you can," says S. Bonaventure, "pronounce no word without attention and understanding it."† To their advice these holy religious added their example. S. Francis of Assisi rigorously punished himself for even the least voluntary distractions. S. Joseph of Cupertino, whose ecstasies and extraordinary gifts rendered him so like the founder

\* "Nihil aliud dum psallitis, quam quod psallitis cogetetis. Nec illa quidem profecto recipere tunc consulerim quæ forte paulo ante in claustro sedentes in codicibus legeratis, qualia et nunc me viva voce disserente, ex hoc auditorio Spiritus Sancti recentia reportatis. Salubria sunt sed minime illa salubriter inter psallendum revolvitis."—*In Cant. xlvii.*

† *Reg. nov. de Off. c. i.* S. Teresa gave the same advice to her nuns:—"When I recite the *Credo*, I ought, I think, to understand what I believe; so also when I say: *Our Father*—love requires me that I should know Who this Father is," etc.—*Chem. de la perf. xxv.*

of his order, knew well how to restrain his imagination and apply his thoughts to the letter of the Divine Office. He could not pardon himself if he had said a single word inattentively ; and whenever he found that he was becoming careless, he repeated again without hesitation the verse that he had been too carelessly reciting.\* Accordingly he owned that the Breviary was for him a source of inexpressible delight and consolation.

Still, it is not only the understanding that should act. It is easy to comprehend that the Office, in order to be well said requires something more than a mere serious and attentive reading.† In the affective portions especially, as in the Psalms for example and in everything that constitutes a true prayer, it becomes necessary to join the sentiments of the heart to the considerations of merely a mental kind. *Tibi dixit cor meum*, said David.‡ The same outward manifestations that make our hearts ascend with the Psalmist, should cause us to enter into his thoughts and affections, in such wise that our words really express what we feel, and be as true on our lips as they were upon his.

\* We do not adduce this example to countenance the scruples of certain clerics who think themselves unceasingly obliged to go over their office again, and who can never find themselves able to recite it to their satisfaction. For the scrupulous, we hold to the rule :—*Ne iteres verbum in oratione tua*.—Eccl. xviii. 15. But this is not the case here, and we are compelled to admire that energy of will that ended by bending to obedience, the most rebellious of our faculties :—*In captivitatem redigens intellectum in obsequium Christi*.—II. Cor. x. 5. See at the end of the Book, Note II., on *Distractions*.

† “Non tam quæras scientiam quam saporem.”—S. Bern., in *Spec. mon.* Now we may read in three ways : carelessly, seriously, and piously. The Office then should never be said carelessly ; and not only must it be always said seriously as a grave matter, but it ought always to be performed piously, in a spirit of prayer, as an act of piety. See Surin, *Cat. Spirit. p. iv.*

‡ *Ps. xxvi. 8.* In me sunt, Deus, vota tua, quæ reddam, laudationes tibi. *Ps. lv. 12.*

Such also is the teaching of the Doctors. "It is the heart," say they, "that God considers"; it is to the heart He listens. Enter then interiorly into the whole mind of the prophet Psalmist. If he pray, pray with him if he lament, lament with him: rejoice when he rejoices—hope when he hopes—tremble when he fears.\* To recite the Psalms without interior feeling, is to resemble sounding brass and tinkling cymbol.† Let it not be objected that the words of the Office are not our own, that the Psalms were not composed for us—that they suppose a train of thoughts, circumstances and dispositions that are not ours. For the Office has been compiled for *us*; and, as to the Psalms in particular, we cannot too often repeat that David is not their first and principle object: it is our Lord. Accordingly, what they express is not the mind of any one man in particular, but the mind of all Christians, considered in regard to the Head Who unites, and as it were sums them up; they are the dispositions which the grace of God works first in Jesus Christ, the source and fulness of the entire supernatural life, next after Him and through Him, all those whom He has incorporated in Himself as His members by Holy Baptism; therefore, they are ours as well as David's and of all the just. Thus, it was for us the Psalms were written; it was us whom the Holy Ghost had in view from the beginning, when He inspired them. It is of our perils that He speaks in them—it is our combats He there describes;

\* "Si orat psalmus orate; et si gemit gemit, et si gratuletur gaudite; et si sperat sperati; et si timet timeti. Omnia enim quæ hic scripta sunt speculum nostrum sunt."—S. Aug., *Enarr. iii. in Ps. xxx.*

† Pet. Blos., *Serm. syn. 56, supra p. 39.*

it is for our faults He therein sighs, it is our repentance, our hope, zeal, thanksgiving, and love that speak therein by Him in such true and touching language. They belong then really to us, and we should search in vain religion to discover to what more literally apply the words of S. Paul:—*Omnia vestra sunt; vos autem Christi; Christus autem Dei.*\*

It is proper here to recall once more the great mystery of Christian unity proclaimed by S. Paul. All the faithful form but one body, and Jesus Christ Who is its Head, communicating the same spirit and the same life to all His members, there is necessarily among them all a community of sentiments and identity of prayers. *In commune orant, in commune laborant,*† in such manner

\* *Cor. iii. 22.*—Sicut olim manna habuit omne delectamentum et omnem saporem suavitatis, ita nunc psalmi habent effectum omnium orationum, et sensum cujuslibet intentionis. In ore justi sunt verba gratias agentis, in ore peccatoris verba veniam deprecantes, pro defunctis verba animæ de supplicio ad Deum Clamantis; et quocumque se intentio canentis converterit illuc se sensus psalmodum affectu canentis conformabit. . . . Dum cogitas psalmos Christus in mente tua est; dum ore psalmos decantas, Christus in ore tuo est. Psalmodum radices non in terra sed in cœlo fixæ sunt, quia ibi est Christus qui omnium psalmodum materia est et intentio; ibi est conversatio Ecclesiæ quæ est Corpus Christi. Radulph, *de Can. observ. c. ix.*

† S. Ambr. *de Offic. l. 1, cxxix. n. 142.*—There is no doctrine more strongly nculcated by the apostle, nor more frequently developed by the fathers and spiritual writers. For S. Paul, see *Rom. xii. 5; 1. Cor. xii. 11, etc.; Ephes. i. 22, ii. 20, iv. 43, v. 23; Col. i. 18, ii. 19.* For tradition, see S. Aug. in his commentaries upon the Psalms, *v.g. in Psalm xlii. 1.* “Esurit Ecclesia, esurit homo ille ubique diffusus cujus caput sursum est, membra deorsum. Ejus vocem in omnibus psalmis vel psallentem vel gementem, vel lætantem in spe, vel suspirantem in re notissimum jam et familiarissimam, habere debemus tanquam nostram. Non ergo diu immorandum est ut insinuemus vobis quis loquætur. Sit unusquisque in Christi Corpore et loquetur hic.” Among spiritual writers, consult M. Olier, *Catechisme Chrétien*; Bossuet, *Lettres de piété, iv<sup>e</sup>.* *Lettre a une demoiselle de Metz sur le mystere de l’unité de l’Eglise, No. 4, 5, 15 et 21*—and Sermon on the Trinity—*fin du premier point.* H. E. Cardinal Manning, *Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost, c. 1, and notes, etc.*

that what one asks, not only does Jesus Christ ask it with him, but every Christian also should be disposed to ask it as He does.

What we have just said applies specially to the affective portions of the Breviary. But it must not therefore be thought that the lessons, the little chapters, etc., demand less attention on our part. If we ought so to apply our mind to the words we address to our Lord, so as only to say what we really think, we must likewise hear Him and strive to profit by His counsel :—*Suscipite insitum verbum quod potest salvare animas vestras.*\*

The Divine Office offers two kinds of instruction ; the first, such as are read invariably every day.† Others, that only occur from time to time, at certain determined periods. The former should be considered as the foundations of our life, as the rules of conduct ; and the latter we should regard as so many revelations, or as particular counsels of which we stand in need in the accidental circumstances in which we may be placed. What profit would be drawn from these instructions, of what light and consolations would they be the source if they were always read in this spirit and with these dispositions ! ‡

\* *Jac. i. 21.* Not but that the Psalms themselves frequently offer matter for useful reflection. There is an example to be seen in the life of P. Brydaine :—" One day in the interval between his preachings, he was reciting his Office with some of his confreres. All of a sudden he stopped, bursting into tears, and choked by his sobs. They were at the verse, xlix. Psalm—*Quare tu enduras justitiam meam ?* etc. He was asked the cause of his emotion. ' Ah ! don't you see that I am pronouncing my own condemnation ? What do I but preach the law of God and break it incessantly.' " S. Epiphanius relates a similar case of Origen when penitent.—*Hæres 64.*

† For example :—*Venite exaltemus. . . . Regi Sæculorum. . . . Sobrii estote, etc.*

‡ It would be easy to cite many examples. I limit myself to a single one, drawn from the *Memoirs of Cardinal Pacca*. After having described the



To resume. The best advice as to the recitation of the "Hours," is to apply ourselves as much as possible to the words we are pronouncing, and to join to them interiorly the thoughts and sentiments we express. We do not deny that there may be cause for some exceptions. In certain states of union with God, the soul is sometimes seized with thoughts and movements from which it is neither useful nor easy to withdraw itself. Even persons who are the most profoundly self-collected are habitually less attentive to the words they are pronouncing than to Him to Whom they address themselves, or to the graces which they desire to obtain.\* We do not press them to do violence to their feelings. But contemplative minds are very rare. Ordinarily speaking it is not the spirit of God that distracts us during the Office, and therefore we cannot but gain by following its meaning with a gentle firmness and sustained attention.†

dragging away of Pius VII., and the incidents of the first day's journey after leaving Rome, he makes this reflection. "By the appointment of Providence, the prayers of the Church for that day at the Office as at Mass, seemed to announce what we had under our observation. Everything in it breathed confidence, courage, consolation. At Matins was read the passage of S. Matthew, where the bark of Peter, image of the Church, was mentioned. It carried the apostles upon the Lake of Genesareth and was beaten about by the tempest:—*Navicula in medio mari jactabatur fluctibus*, says the apostle, *erat enim contrarius ventus*. But soon our Lord appears upon the surging waves. He enters the ship and calm is restored—*Et cessavit ventus*. In the evening, at the second Nocturn, we read the eloquent words in which S. Chrysostom praises and felicitates S. Peter and S. Paul for their constancy, and rejoices with them over the torments they had suffered. . . . I remarked this coincidence to the Holy Father."—*T. I., part ii., c. i.*

\* "Semper in psalmis meditemur, atque voce concordi, Domino canamus dulciter hymnos."—*Hymn. matut. post Trinit.*

† "Oratio frequens quamdam operatur disciplinam orandi quid ipse usus docibiles Dei facit, indociles autem negligentia."—S. Ambr., *De Cain et Abel.*



## CHAPTER VI.

### SIXTH PRACTICE: TO MAINTAIN A REVEREND ATTITUDE.

IN celebrating the Divine Office publicly everything commands our respect and obliges us to watchfulness over ourselves. The holiness of the place, the thought of the Divine Majesty there present, the gaze of others to which we are exposed, suffice for the removing of all danger of unbecoming conduct and every appearance of distraction. It is not so when saying the Office alone. The eye of God makes less impression, alas! than when supported by that of men.\* Moreover, nature is skilful in discovering pretexts to excuse its weakness. We fear to fatigue the soul if we inconvenience the body; or we desire to husband our strength and application for some other observance which we deem more important; we say to ourselves, God is a Spirit and He only looks to the intention of our heart. Thus we allow ourselves without scruple many secret licences and indulgences, and at last contract habits of immortification as baneful to the spirit of prayer as they are contrary to the glory of God and the edification of our neighbour.

Undoubtedly, it is the interior only that God values and considers in us; but does not this interior essentially

\* "Difficile est Deo tantum iudice esse contentum."—S. Hieron, *Ep. xxxv. ad Heliod.*

depend upon outward attitude and behaviour? God has not given the body to the soul merely for it to be the seat of the soul's action and the instrument of its will; He ordained that the soul should be associated with our body in the closest possible union, that it should be the principle of its life and all its acts; or rather, in making of these two substances one only person, He has made such an union between them, such an exact correspondence, that every influence, every disposition, every manner or mode of being, must necessarily be communicated from one to the other,\* and that nothing whatever that affects the one can remain uncommunicated to the other. It is upon this truth that the necessity for an external and public worship is grounded. It is on this motive that outward observances are recommended to the faithful—that they are exhorted to maintain a modest and respectful posture during the Divine Mysteries—*Sancta sancte*, are they told. By what right shall we assume to question the authority of these maxims or refuse to submit to these rules? Unless we would contradict ourselves, we must admit that we cannot worthily recite the Office, or feel in our heart the religious sentiments it requires, without our showing them outwardly in a sensible manner. From this we must conclude, that the ecclesiastic whose attitude should fail in respect during this function, who should give freedom to his senses and every compliance with nature, as if it were a question merely of relaxation or

\* "Nescio quomodo cum hi motus corporis fieri nisi motu animæ præcedenti non possint eisdem exterius rursus visibiliter factis ille interior invisibilis qui eos fecit augetur ac per hoc cordis affectus qui ut fierent ista præcessit, quia facta sunt crescit."—S. Aug., *De Cura pro mort.* c. v.

profane reading, could not be filled with the spirit of true devotion, and that he would not be slow to stifle in his heart even the smallest germs of piety.

Accordingly, what examples do we, in this respect, find in the life of our Lord and of holy priests? Certainly, our Lord prayed everywhere, in every circumstances, even the most distracting, because His mind, like His heart, was always united to His Father; but His exterior was also always grave and religious. But when He applied Himself exclusively to prayer, when He would give His disciples the example of prayer, with what humility did He not prostrate Himself before the Supreme Majesty! He raised His eyes to heaven:—*Sublevatis oculis in cælum*.\* He bent His knees like a suppliant. *Procidit super terram*.† *Et positus genibus orabat*.‡ Sometimes He bent low and continued prostrate, His face on the ground. *Procidit in faciam suam orans*.§ The apostles and first Christians prayed in the same manner:—*Ejectis omnibus, Petrus ponens genua oravit*.|| *Et positus genibus suis, oravit Paulus cum omnibus illis*.¶ Following their example, many holy priests make a rule to recite the Divine Office on their knees, so far as circumstances permit. This practice was common in those days, when the virtues of mortification and penance were not looked upon as the exclusive duties of the cloister.\*\* It was the habit of S. Vincent Ferrier, of

\* *Joan. xvii. 1.*

† *Marc. xiv. 35.*

‡ *Luc. xxii. 41.*

§ *Matth. xxvi. 39.*

|| *Acts ix. 40.*

¶ *Acts xx. 36.* S. Jerome says of S. James, Bishop of Jerusalem:—"Pro populo flexis genibus deprecabatur in tantum ut camelorum directions traxisse ejus genua crederentur."—*De Veris illustribus*. And Sulpicius Severus says of S. Martin:—"Eum in Ecclesia nemo unquam sedere conspexit".—*Vita I. xi.*

\*\* As to sitting down, S. Peter Domian did not allow it, even during the long offices in choir. Having heard that the custom had found its way into the

S. Charles, of the Venerable Bellarmin, S. Vincent of Paul, S. Francis of Sales, and of S. Francis of Hieronymo, and again, in our day, of the holy Curé d'Ars.\* Now if by the side of these pious priests there are others equally to be respected, who have not thought it necessary to subject themselves to so painful a rule, if they thought such mortification above their ordinary strength, not one of them is there who has not used a grave and modest demeanour, and whose exterior has not borne witness to his religious humility and fervour, inspired by his august ministry.†

Who has not often had occasion to admire in some good priest, the grave and religious manner in which he performed this duty? Who has not received a wholesome impression from this sight? Indeed we were penetrated with attention and respect when witnessing the modesty of his attitude, his guarded look, the deep reverence we beheld in his countenance. We seemed almost to think that God was before us, so present appeared the Divine Greatness and Holiness! We thought of those angels of the Apocalypse, whom S. John saw prostrate before the throne of the Lamb.‡ O what

Church of Besancon, he, in order to oppose it, wrote his XXXIXth Opuscale—*Contra sedentes tempore Officio*.

\* We have it from a high authority, that it was the custom of the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX., to recite the whole Office on his knees without any support; an example the more touching, since it is but little known and commonly but little appreciated.

† The blessed Peter of Luxembourg, who died at the age of 18, Cardinal Bishop of Metz, had made it a rule to recite his Office on his knees, bare-headed. Seeing one day a simple cleric, who was saying it, seated and head covered, "Do you seriously reflect," said the Cardinal, "that it is to God you are speaking? Surely if you were to address a cardinal or a bishop, you would adopt a more respectful bearing."—*His Life*, p. 182.

‡ *Apoc. v. 11.*

a sight is a priest thus absorbed in prayer! If his body pray not in the same manner as does his soul, at least it is united to his prayer—gives utterance to and completes it; at least he causes others to pray—he spreads around love and reverence for the Supreme Majesty; and thus he glorifies God much better than those shining stars which the Psalmist says, tell out in the heavens the glory of the Most High.\* But what can there be more sorrowful, what more afflicting than lax ecclesiastics performing this duty with carelessness, pronouncing the sacred words with a loose and profane air, calling without respect upon Him, at whose sight the angels tremble, and reciting with a cold indifference the most touching prayers, and who express by their words the humblest feeling, the deepest sorrow, the most burning love, and show in their bearing only vanity, curiosity, and absence of mortification; reuniting in their person the most opposite things, the voice of Jacob, and the hands of Esau.† The language of Jesus Christ, and the worldly exterior of the children of the age! Who would not be shocked with such a contradiction! Who but would imagine our Heavenly Father hesitating, as it were, to receive such equivocal homage, and complaining of such deceitfulness! *Quare tu enarras justitiam tuam et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum.*‡

Thus for the ecclesiastic who seeks to glorify God and honour his ministry in the Divine Office, it is not enough to watch over his thoughts and feelings; he must guard also his exterior, and put away with care

\* *Ps. xviii. 1.*

† *Gen. xxvii. 22.*

‡ *Ps. xlix. 16.*



everything that may lead to distraction or disedification. As he cannot be attentive, at one and the same time, to external objects and interior thoughts, he will keep a restraint on his eyes.\* His face will exhibit modesty and self-control. He will avoid with care any soft, careless, and disrespectful attitude. If he do not habitually kneel in profoundest adoration—he will sit down reluctantly—remaining prostrate at least in heart and desire, and always testifying by his behaviour a certain respectfulness:—*Flectens genu cordis.*† He might as much as possible remain uncovered, out of respect for God in Whose presence he is praying.‡ During the Office he will desire to conform to the rules prescribed for its public celebration. At the beginning of it he

\* “Quando oras claude ostium tuum ne tentator ingrediat.”—S. Aug., in *Psalm cxli.*

† “Et nunc flecto genu cordis mei, precans a te bonitatem.”—*Orat. Man.*

‡ The venerable Paul of the Cross, founder of the barefooted clerics of the Holy Cross, 1694-1775, never recited his office but with his head uncovered, and with a most edifying expression of countenance; and when he saw a priest act differently, he could not forbear showing his annoyance. Nothing could change his conduct in this respect. During his journeys, and at the times he was most incommoded, he was often seen on the roadside praying bare-headed, notwithstanding the most piercing cold. The brother who took care of him in his old age, seeing him overpowered with infirmity, often tried to make him give up this habit, representing to him that prudence required it, and that God would not be displeased. Then the venerable father, whose sweetness of disposition made him unable to refuse anything he was asked to do—did his best to comply. He covered his head for a short time, but soon uncovered it again. “Indeed, brother, I cannot say my Office.” Then he added—“We ought to think of what we are saying, and consider to whom we are speaking”. *Vita del ven. serv. de Dio. P. Paolo della Croce Roma, 4to, 1786.* The Abbé de Rancé attached so much importance to exterior respect, and in particular to the uncovering of the head in the choir, that he only allowed the infirm to dispense themselves at the night office with this rule. He made it even an obstacle to receiving into the noviciate anyone who thought he could not subject himself to this rule. See *Vie par Dom Pierre le Noari, t. ii., l. vi., c. vi.*



will kneel to beg God to penetrate him with the sentiments such an action demands, and also at the end of it to humble himself for his faults, and to gain the indulgence of the *Sacrosanct*.\* He will stand at the most striking passages, either to show his piety or to prevent that indifference which is apt to follow continuity.† In short, he will endeavour always to show that modesty and piety that, at the mere sight of him, each one may without hesitation exclaim: Here is a man who really prays to God,‡ and can himself, at

\* Mgr. de Bernex, one of the successors and most perfect imitator of S. Francis of Sales, was not content with reciting all the office on his knees—he prostrated himself and kissed the ground at the end of it, through piety and humility. *Vie de M. de Roussillon de Bernex*.

† This is the advice S. Bonaventure gave to his novices:—"Si quando ad sedendum debilitas evidens vel nimia lassitudo compellat; saltem ad inceptionem officii—ad Invitatorium Hymnos ad orationem Dominicam, etc., surgere non omittant."—*Specul. novit*. This applies if we be alone or with others of the clergy, for in public or before the laity we ought to omit any unusual outward demonstrations. *Signa exterius non debent fieri in omni loco*, says S. Thomas, *quia homo non debet singularis apparere in exterioribus*.—In Epist. ad Tit. ii., lii. etc.

‡ Prayer is nowhere out of place, says S. Augustine. We see the saints pray at table—even in bed.—*Elias edendo—publicanus sedendo David cubando orarunt* (ad Sempl. i., ii., c. iv.) *Spiritus replevit domum ubi apostoli erant sedentes* (Act ii. 2.) But if it be always praiseworthy to pray, and if we can pray perfectly under all circumstances, there are, however, certain positions too disrespectful to be permitted unnecessarily during a prayer of obligation like the Divine Office. S. Peter Damian makes this remark, laying great stress on a striking example. "The superior of a neighbouring monastery whom he knew very well, thought on account of his bad health that he might dispense himself from saying complins with his monks, having acquired the habit of saying it as his last prayer before going to bed. He was, however, an excellent Abbot, and had a reputation for sanctity. God deigned to open his eyes, and even his weakness. One day they brought him a man who was possessed, in order that he might impose his hand on him and deliver him—when the devil raising his voice cried out:—'Eh! what? is it you who pretend to measure yourself against me? You, who have not even the courage to stand up to pray to God, you hope to make me fear, and take by force this slave whom I possess.

any moment reply without a blush, like that King to whom the Lord had revealed His greatness :—" I praise, I honour the King of heaven."—*Ego laudo et glorifico Regem cæli.\**

*Tunc ille es qui sub cotto quotidie completorium insusurras?* The monk, astonished at this revelation, and confounded by the reproach, thanked God for the lesson he had given him, and after having confessed his fault, he promised never to fall into it again."—*Opusc. xxiv. c. vi.*

\* *Dan. iv. 34.*

## CHAPTER VII.

### SEVENTH PRACTICE : TO CHOOSE THE TIME, PLACE, AND CIRCUMSTANCES MOST FAVOURABLE FOR PRAYER.

IF there be a suitable posture for praying, there are also certain times, places and external conditions that particularly aid us in prayer. A zealous priest who values the Office, and therefore makes it a point to say it properly, will know how to know and profit by these circumstances.

The proper time to pray is not when leaving some dissipating amusement, or some engrossing occupation ; still less fitting is it to resort to it when troubled by emotion, or wearied by fatigue. In such cases we are too much exposed to suffer from distractions or negligence.

The morning hours that precede and which follow immediately upon Mass—and those of the evening, the furthest from meals and visits are the most suitable, because at that time the mind is more collected, and the senses offer fewer obstacles to its action.\* However, it must be understood we do not prescribe or recommend

\* Navaire remarks that it is difficult in rising from meals to support, for any length of time, one's attention :—*Nocturnum et Laudes sunt tanta pars interdum quantam quis cœnatus uno contextu satis attente et devote non potest facile dicere.*—De Orat. c. iii., no. 28. To choose those times for prayer, to which study would but ill adapt itself, would not be like Abel, who consecrated to God whatever he had of the best.

any manner specially. In noticing here what the spirit of prayer is accustomed to suggest, we admit without difficulty, that a cleric is not always free to follow his devotion, that he has often to take into account many necessities, and, in the impossibility of reuniting every advantage, it is right to choose that course which offers the fewest inconveniences.

The same remark applies to the choice of place and circumstance, for we are not like S. Bernard, who everywhere found an equal facility for prayer,\* we ought to know how, when it is needful, to offer everywhere our worthy homage to God. The apostle desired that the Christians should know how to pray everywhere in public as well as in private. *Volo viros orare in omni loco.*† He himself prayed with equal devotion, in prison, on the sea-shore, amid the cries of the sailors.‡ Why should a priest hesitate, on occasion, to pray to God under the eyes of the world, and put his duty above certain proprieties exaggerated by human respect? We know of a priest who felt a particular consolation in bearing in mind the thought of God when it is usually absent, and in glorifying His greatness in places where it is the most unknown.§ It seemed as if by prayer he purified what sin had stained, and, as if he had restored to the Divine Majesty a portion of His empire, he repeated with joy the words of the Psalmist :—*Domini est terra*

\* “*Illi ad meditandum omnis hora brevis, omnis locus congruus erat.*”—S. Bern., *Vita I. iii., c. i.* This holy doctor praises in S. Malachy a similar gift of mental recollectedness :—*Hoc habebat Malachius quod in turbis erat sine perturbatione.* This is no common privilege, and one not to be abused.

† *I. Tim. ii.*

‡ *Acts xvi. 13, 25; xxi. 5; xxvii. 24.*

§ *Cf. Vie de M. de Renty, par le P. Saint Jure, 1<sup>er</sup> p.*

*et plenitudo ejus.\* In omni loco dominationis ejus benedic anima mea Domini.†* Not that we should choose, in preference, public places or assemblies in which to recite our Office. To act thus without necessity, and intentionally, would be to expose ourselves to a twofold inconvenience ; to pray badly, and to cause contempt for our ministry. Generally speaking, it is apart and far from the noise of the world and tumult, that it is most convenient to pray to God, and it is there we may hope to do so with fruit. Such is the doctrine of the Divine Master :—*Non eritis sicut hypocritæ, qui amant in angulis platearum stantes orare. Tu autem, intra in cubiculum tuum et clauso ostio ora Patrem tuum.‡* Such was His ordinary practice. Everywhere He thought of His Father, and honoured Him in His heart ; but if He wanted to pray externally for a long or short time, if He could not go to the temple—He left the crowd §—He retired to the desert||—He reached some mount, where silence and the sight of heaven bore the senses and spirit towards God. Sometimes He left the company even of the disciples—even that of those most dear to Him.¶ His apostles had no other manner of prayer, and the book of Acts shows how faithfully, and as much as possible, they conformed to His example and advice.\*\*

\* *Ps. xxiii. 1.*

† *Ps. cii. 22.* "Ibi non benedicatur ubi non dominatur."—S. Aug., *in hunc loc.*

‡ *Matt. vi. 5.*

§ "Dimissa turba ascendit solus orare."—*Matth. xiv. 13.*

|| "Abiit in montem orare."—*Marc. vi. 46.* Item, *Matth. xvii. 1, etc.*

¶ "Sedete hic donec vadam illuc orare."—*Matth. xxvi. 36.* Conf. S. Bernard, *Serm. xl. in Cant. 4.*

\*\* *Act iii. 1 ; xii. 12 ; xxii. 17.*—S. Peter retired, like Judith (viii. 5) to the

If we consult the lives of holy priests and religious of a certain period, we shall find that many of them would have felt a scruple to recite the Office walking,\* and that they used to stop in their journeys to fulfil this duty. It does not appear, however, that the contrary practice was ever regarded as out of keeping with the respect due to God in prayer; for in every age we find authorised examples of it.† However this may be, it has been allowed long ago by the strictest ecclesiastics.

Indeed, we see those whom we cannot tax with indifference, habitually reciting the Office, as it is written that Isaac meditated‡ walking in the country. This habit may also be reconciled with all the requirements of an excellent prayer. Still, this ease accorded to nature should be compensated for by a greater modesty and by a pace more steady and slow.§ Rugged ways

highest part of the house, to pray there with more tranquillity. It was also one of the pious customs of S. Charles. S. Ignatius of Loyola followed the same practice, and we know he attached much importance to the choice of place. He said that whenever he had neglected this precaution his mind was assailed by distractions.

\* One of the Councils of the sixteenth century still forbids it, and we remark in the life of P. Balt Alvarez, that he did not permit himself to do so.

† Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, says of S. Germanus, Bishop of Paris in the sixth century, that he recited his office on his journeys with an imperturbable attention and respect, notwithstanding the most annoying opposition. "Equitans in itinere semper de Deo aliquid aut verbo contabit aut cantavit cursum nudo capite, dicens, etsi nix aut imber urgeret."—*Act Sanct.*, 28th March, *Vita Cap. lxxviii.* William of Malmsbury relates the same thing of S. Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1008-1095.—Thomassin, *Ancienne et nouvelle Discipline*, t. i., l. ii., c. lxxxvii. The words *Cursus*, *Canon*, *Psallium*, had for long the meaning, *Divinum Officium*, *Horæ Canonice*, etc.

‡ "Deambulabat Isaac et egressus fuerat ad meditandum in agro inclinata jam die."—*Gen. xxiv. 63.* "Inter quæmlas aves psalmi dulcius cantantur," says S. Jerome.

§ It would certainly be a phenomenon to see a man with haste and at the same time praying quietly, calmly, and attentively.



and frequented paths should be avoided, and care should be taken not to stop or interrupt, without cause, the recitation.\* If these conditions be observed, it seems to us there need be no fear of disedification, and that the Office may be recited on a journey or during a walk, with as much attention and advantage as in the depths of a solitude or in the silence of the oratory.†

Is it useful to have a companion that we may say the breviary aloud, alternately? We think it is well to use this method occasionally, it is a means of preventing the bad effects of routine, and it reanimates our fervour. Provided there be on both sides a real piety, each one is excited and edified like the Seraphim of which Isaias speaks; and they will have less difficulty in entering into the spirit of the Office, the more they conform to the usages of the choir.‡ S. Charles bound himself

\* This is the place to recall the example of that holy priest who said :—“Opus grande facio et non possum descendere”.—*Esdras vi. 3*; and the rule of S. Bonaventure :—“Interruptiones non fiant nisi urgente necessitate”.—*Spec. discip. p. 1, c. xvi.*

† Let us note, however, speaking of edification, the observation of a man of the world—a distinguished mind of the seventeenth century :—“F. Sirmon, the ornament of the Society of Jesus, possessed virtues equal to his science. As I often saw him, I remarked that he always said his breviary kneeling, in his room. How edifying! and this too in an age so advanced as ours! . . . Our gentlemen with fat livings act very differently now-a-days. Some of them I see, who go to court, saying their office in their carriage.” . . . De Valois, *Valeriana*.

‡ “The angels mutually excite each other to praise God. The Scripture shows them to us beating their wings one over the other, animating each other, exciting each other, and saying :—*Holy, Holy, Holy, thrice Holy. God is holy in the Father, God is holy in the Son, God is holy in the Holy Ghost, God is holy in Himself.* Thus the angels answer each other. Each of the three Hierarchies render this homage to God, and call Him Holy by turns. And God pleased with this concert, excites the priests, His visible angels, to associate themselves to please Him in the same manner; and makes them say to each other :—*Venite exultemus Domino; jubilemus Deo salutari nostro.*”—Olier,

thus to say all the Hours, he knew (says the author of his life) that Our Lord has promised to specially assist with His presence those who are gathered together in His name (see life by Giussano), and he had learned by his own experience that prayer, ordinarily speaking, is said with more attention and fervour in public :—*Mutuo provocant se quis melius Deo suo canet.*\* We must add, however, that this practice would lose its advantages, if we do not join to it all desirable conditions of piety, modesty, and gravity. We even read in the history of many holy priests whom God had inspired with a particular devotion for the Sacred Office, that they found it best to say it alone, because in this way they could give themselves up more to their fervour, and taste more fully the consolations of heaven.† But in whatever way it be recited—alone or with others—the most convenient place, where we have every freedom in this respect, and where attention is easiest, where we are more easily penetrated with the ministry we exercise—is the church and at the foot of the altar.‡ The church is properly the house of prayer, because it is the house of God upon earth :—*Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur.*§ It is there the Lord calls His children, that He invites them to offer up their supplications to Him.|| There He

*Memoires, t. v. 304.* According to the historian Socrates, it was at the end of a vision, in which angels had been shown to him singing thus in two choirs the praises of God, that S. Ignatius, second successor of S. Peter as Bishop of Antioch, established in his church the use of Psalmody.

\* Tert. *ad Uæor, lib. ii. sub fine.* † Dupont, *Vie de Balth. Alvarez.*

‡ “Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion. Replebimur in bonis domus tuæ sanctum est templum tuum ; mirabile in æquitate.”—*Ps. lxiv. 25.*

§ *Matth. xxi. 13.*

|| “In templo ejus omnes dicent gloriam.”—*Ps. xxviii. 9.* Cf. *2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>o</sup> q. lxxxiv. art. 3.*

promises them His special regard and goodwill. There nothing distracts the mind: everything leads to recollection and fervour. At the time especially when the Sacred Mysteries are solemnised, and the Divine Offices celebrated, does it not seem as if the Majesty of God were visibly made present, and that we are transported to heaven amidst the angelic choirs, swelling with one voice, the never-ending song of worship! \* *Dominus in templo sancto suo : Dominus in cælo sedes ejus.* †

What a consolation then to repeat with the Church, in presence of the Lamb offered for the salvation of men, those divine hymns which David sang in the Temple of Sion, and which the Holy Ghost dictated to him, as echoes of the heavenly concert, and which He destined to resound till the end of time in all the sanctuaries of the living God! ‡ And even in the intervals of the Divine Offices, when the church is empty and silent, what a joy is it not for the heart of a good priest to go and place himself at the foot of the Tabernacle, as the representative of his people, and to think he is delegated to God by the Universal Church, to unite himself with all his brethren in the mighty worship that rises from this earthly altar to the throne of the Eternal Father, as really and incessantly as from the mystic altar of heaven! What a consolation to read in the

\* Cf. S. Chryost., *de Sacerd. l. iii. c. iii.*—"Dum conspicias Dominum immolatum et illuc situm, etiam ne te inter mortales versari atque in terra consistere censes?" etc.

† *Ps. x. 4; Hab. ii. 20.*

‡ "Bene mari comparatur Ecclesia, quæ primo ingredientis populi agmine totis vestibulis undas vomit deinde in oratione totius plebis tanquam undis fluentibus stridet cum responsoriis psalmorum cantus virorum, mulierum, virginum parvulorum consonus undarum fragor resultat."—S. Ambr., *Hexam. l. iii., c. v.* Cf. S. Aug., *l. ix., c. iv., and l. vi., c. vi.*

Holy Word, the very expression of the feeling with which the Man-God is inflamed as a perpetual holocaust in His adorable Sacrament! What joy to lend Him his heart and lips to outwardly extend, multiply, and produce the affections that superabound in His soul! It is then that he sings as did David, in the midst of angels,\* that he unites himself sensibly, as do the elect of heaven, to the adoration of the Lamb,† and would associate with himself every creature, in order to offer in the name of them all to the Sovereign Master a homage which Our Lord's dignity raises to an infinite height :—*Venite exultemus Domino, jubilemus Deo Salvatori nostro.* ‡

It would be needless to cite examples in support of our words. We will limit ourselves to recalling once more that venerable Curé d'Ars raised up by God to show what piety may render us capable of, and at what a price it is worth purchasing. He only recited his Office before the altar, from which, indeed, he was rarely away. During the first years of his ministry, whilst yet unknown, and his church but little frequented, he always said his Office kneeling, upon the floor of the choir without support of any kind. His flock liked to come at such time to watch him, and witness his fervour. "Often," said an eye-witness, "he paused whilst praying : his looks fixed upon the Tabernacle, with eyes in which were painted so lively a faith, that one might suppose Our Lord was visible to his gaze. Later, his church

\* *Ps. cxxxvii. 1.*

† "Omnes angeli stabant in conspectu throni, et adoraverunt Deum dicentes : Amen."—*Apoc. vii. 11.*

‡ *Ps. xciv. 1.*

being continually filled with an attentive crowd, following his least movements, he took pains to shun everything that might excite their admiration. Yet still he might be frequently found after a whole day passed in the Sacred Tribunal, reciting his 'Hours' on his knees, either in the Sacristy or in a corner of the choir a few steps from the altar: so strong was the attraction that drew him to unite his prayer to that of Our Lord! so great were the love and respect inspired by the presence and infinite Majesty of his Divine Master!" \*

\* *Vie de M. Vianney*, by M. Monnin, t. I, l. ii., c. i.; and t. II, l. v., c. iv. S. Jerome notes this love for God's house as the most certain mark of the sacerdotal spirit. "Si quis vult Pontifex non tam vocabulo esse quam merito, imitetur Moysen imitetur Aaron, de quibus dicitur quod non discedunt de domo Domini."—See *Corpus Juris*, Dist. 36, 3; Can. *Si quis vult*. He might have added—*Imitetur Apostolos*. See *Luc. xxiv. 53. Act. iii. 1; xxii. 17.*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### EIGHTH PRACTICE : TO AVOID HURRY IN THE RECITATION.

THERE is nothing more difficult in vocal prayer than to avoid precipitation, because this fault is the natural consequence of almost every other. Dissipation of mind, routine, the desire for liberty, pre-occupations, and above all, that restless activity that hinders us from fixing our thoughts upon anything whatever, and makes us always long after some new object—all conspire to render the 'Office' time inopportune and to shorten its duration. In order to recite habitually the Office with suitable gravity and attention, we must love it and find it attractive ; and to love it and relish it we require to have the spirit of prayer, of self-recollection and fervour. Everything tending to weaken this spirit, tends thereby to diminish the love of the Divine Office and to hurry its recitation. Accordingly it is a fault of frequent occurrence and there are but few priests who do not frequently fall into it.\* If there be no more common fault, we may add there is none more fatal nor in its effects more difficult of cure. "Haste," says S. F. of Sales, "is the destroyer of devotion." If we accustom ourselves to it, the in-

\* This is the reason of the first recommendation given to them in the Latin verses, so often cited upon the manner of saying the Office :—*Clerice, pausando dic Horas, non properando, etc.* The remainder may be found in Pouget, *Institutiones Catholicæ*, t. vi., c. vi., note.



terior spirit, source of every merit, becomes dried up. It substitutes for the sublimest use of our intellect, a mere life-worship, and replaces holy thoughts and noble sentiments by a blind and mechanical routine. Once enslaved by this defect, vainly does an ecclesiastic multiply words of prayer. He has now no more affecting sentiments—he experiences no further pious emotions. The words that rise to his lips say nothing to his heart, and leave no impression upon his soul; they are no longer anything but a useless number of words, like those for which our Saviour blamed the heathen and the folly of which he pointed out to His disciples:—*Orantes nolite multum loqui, sicut ethnici; putant enim quod multiloquio exaudiantur.\**

How can God accept prayers that scandalise or pain those who hear them? We read in the life of a fervent layman, one of those Christian gentlemen so numerous in the seventeenth century, that he could not without grief see ministers of the Church performing their ‘Office’ with haste and hurry, and that he often deplored the too frequent excesses of this disorder. “Where is faith,” he exclaimed, with sad astonishment—“where then is faith?”† Doubtless many of the faithful on witnessing

\* *Matt. vi. 7.*

† *Vie du Baron de Renty*, by Pere Saint Jure, p. iv., c. vi.—“S. David, the first King of Scotland, being on his death-bed, 29th May, 1153, remarked that the clergy assembled for the administration of the last sacraments, recited the psalms with some haste. He made them a sign to say them more deliberately. He himself followed the verses with attention and answered to all the prayers.” *The B. Ethelred, Abbot of Rievaulx (Rivaux ?), to Henry, Duke of Normandy.*—“The venerable Mary Clotilda, Queen of Sardinia, who died in the odour of sanctity (1802), had the habit of reciting the Divine Office every day. When poorly she said it with her confessor; or he recited it aloud and she joined in spirit, but always with much attention and recollection. She had not only studied its letter, she knew all its rules, and when she perceived there was some

like abuses make the same remark :—"Is it thus," they say, "that God should be addressed and His Law observed? What would these ecclesiastics say, if they saw us hurrying over the prayers which they have prescribed to us in the tribunal of penance? Why should they permit to themselves that which in us they would condemn as an irreverence."

One of the disorders that most affected S. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, was to see even in her own convent that this fault was by no means uncommon. One day as they were reciting Matins in choir with unusual haste, she could contain herself no longer, and leaving her place she went and threw herself at the feet of the prioress—"My mother," said she with zeal, but at the same time with humility, "how is it that we are hurrying in this way? Have we anything to do for the glory of God better than what we are about?" The mother prioress, who had not noticed this disorder, made a sign to her nuns to go slower. But as they continued falling into the same fault, this holy nun, to whom it was insupportable, asked permission to leave the choir or to caution those who were going too fast. "My mother," she said to one of those who seemed impatient to get it over, "since you are so pressed for time why do you not go out at once?" At last, as she was cherished and respected by all the community, she was able to inspire all her sisters with the same sen-

neglect on this score she took care to notice it, with all suitable consideration. She found it difficult to endure, says her historian, those clerics who performed their duty hurriedly, and whose exterior showed but little religion." *Vita della Ven. serva del Deo Maria Clotilde da L. Bostiglio postulatore*, p. 1, c. iv., and p. 11, c. ii.—*Cf. Eliz. Seton*, par Mde. Barberey, p. 433; and *Vie*, par M. Babad, p. 440.

timents, and the abuse that so much disturbed her entirely ceased.\* Now this is what the spirit of prayer does. If the judgment of the saints seem severe, that of worldlings is severer still. They do not, it is true, grieve over these mechanical and hurried prayers, but they ridicule them and, not content with making them the object of their censures, they make use of them as an excuse for their own want of piety. "It is better," say they, "not to pray at all than to do so in so disrespectful and mocking a manner."† And in fact, may we not fear that instead of being a source of merit these hurried prayers may become a subject of reproach and of condemnation? It is not thus that God would be honoured. It is not in this way that we should become the spokesmen of the Church before His Supreme Majesty. To reduce the most sublime function to a purely mechanical exercise, to turn to the detriment of prayer and piety what was destined to preserve and develop both one and the other, such cannot be called indifferent and irreproachable; and those who assume the responsibility of it, and verifying in themselves that terrible imprecation—*Oratio ejus fiat in peccatum*‡ will not escape the punishment foretold by the Psalmist: *Labor labiorum ipsorum operiet eos, cadent super eos carbones.* §

\* *Act. Sanct.* 25 May.—*Her Life*, by P. Cepari, her Confessor.

† A certain cleric made or obtained a sort of reputation for the rapidity with which he said his Office. It was said his haste often made him mistake the words, and that instead of saying *Domine ad adjuvandum me festina* he usually said *Domine ad festinandum me adjuva*. . . . A young man having asked him how long the daily recitation of the Office took—"That depends," he replied, "upon the volubility of the tongue." "I thought," wittily replied the young man, "it would chiefly depend upon the devotion of the heart!"

‡ *Psalm cviii.* 7.

§ *Psalm cxxxix.* 11.

How comes it then that we so readily renounce the merit and fruit attached to the recitation of the Office? What advantage can there be in disedifying the faithful and provoking the indignation of God by such indevotion. It were vain to seek a reasonable motive for such conduct. Even from the lowest point of view, and regarding only our own interest, it is inexplicable; it is an immense loss, and one without compensation.

Let us suppose it is desired to gain time. But in reality, what is gained? what can be gained by so unbecoming a haste? Some short moments in an hour or two—ten minutes at most on the day's Office. Is this an appreciable compensation, I don't say for the fault we commit, for the merit of which we deprive ourselves, for the scandal we cause, for the punishment we incur, but only for the resistance we feel in an exercise so sweet and consoling? Can we rightly, for so small a gain, dry up, as it were, in ourselves the principal springs of grace and render not only barren, but irksome and painful, the most precious hours of our existence? \*

You wish to gain time. Is it then losing time when a priest is employed in praising God and interceding for the Church? Let us suppose we have not sufficient time for our occupations, that it is necessary to contrive to save a few moments; should the saving be made upon those moments devoted to prayer? Such was not the practice of the saints. S. Liguori made a vow never to lose a single moment; yet we do not find that

\* "*Beati inquit, qui scrutantur testimonia ejus! Scrutinio quid opus est? Non dolum ut eruantur mystica, sed ut sugantur moralia. Ideoque vos qui perambulatis hortos scripturarum nolite negligere et otiose transvolare; sed scrutantes singula, sicut apes sedul mel de floribus, spiritum de sermonibus colligite.*"—Guerrie Abb. *in Cantic. viii. 13.*

he ever set the example of hurry in prayer ; on the contrary, no one recommends more earnestly that we should engage in it with calmness, attention, and respect.\* S. F. Xavier had a whole world before him to be converted, he was unable to instruct and baptize all his neophytes ; nevertheless, instead of shortening his Office as he might have done, by the terms of the faculty granted to him, he added to it fresh prayers to obtain the grace to recite it well.†

But, if it is to God's prejudice that you would save time, if you have decided to shorten the prayers you address to Him, why not rather shorten those prayers you say on your own account, and which you may omit without sin ? Without doubt we must try to be constant in our pious exercises ; we must neither omit nor shorten, without necessity, prayer and spiritual reading, and the rosary ; but does not reason in fact tell us that what is obligatory should take precedence of everything that is not ? And as S. Bonaventure teaches,‡ would it not be an illusion to pretend to compensate by prayers of our own choosing, for the voluntary defects of those which the Church requires of us as a strict duty ?

Moreover, what is it that presses so much ? what use do we expect to make of these moments about which we are so anxious ? Just consider the lives of these impatient hurrying men ; you will find their want of time is for them but a pretext.§ And if they show so

\* *On the Divine Office.*

† *Life*, by the P. Bouhours, l. vi.

‡ *Spec. discipul.*—S. Liguori also says, quoting a religious of great virtue, that it is better to shorten prayer than hurry over the Divine Office.

§ "Producitur somnus, producitur mensa producuntur confabulationes, lusus, nugæ nugarum ; solius supremæ Magistatis cultus summa qua potest celeritate deproperatur."—Kugler, *de Spirit. Ecclesiastic.*



much eagerness to gain a few moments, it is less frequently that they may make a good use of them than that they may idle them away.\* They hurry over their work that they may the sooner enjoy with freedom a liberty they know not how to use ; that they may yield themselves without reserve to sloth or idleness ; that they may the sooner begin some recreation, conversation or curious reading of which they will soon tire ; and thus they sacrifice to a vain satisfaction, to an imaginary pleasure that time which, if allowed to be devoted to its legitimate end, would have proved for their soul a source of the sweetest joy and most precious merits.

Monseigneur Devie, bishop of Belley, speaking of the beauty of the psalms, relates according to Bannel, in what way Laharpe was led to study them, after having shared that contempt for them which was felt by his master Voltaire. Having fallen under the suspicion of the Revolution, notwithstanding the assurances he had given, he was thrown into prison ; like many others he had for his companion in captivity a priest who was accustomed to recite his Office in an undertone without troubling himself about the annoyance he thereby caused his neighbours. One day, tired of this continual muttering which, without teaching him anything, hindered his freedom of thought—the man of letters takes, in order to deliver himself from his pest, the only means of which he could think. He asks his companion if he

\* S. Bridget relates, in her *Revelations*, that our Lord complained one day to her that a number of priests lose their time in diverting themselves with their friends, whilst they made such haste over their Office that their prayers was an offence to Him rather than a homage.



could not read somewhat slower and in a distinct tone so that he might be both heard and understood. The priest willingly consents. Laharpe listens, with indifference at first, then with curiosity; soon he feels himself touched by what he hears—he is struck with admiration. The incomparable beauties he discovers excite his wonder. He desires to study the Psalms; he meditates upon them. In short he does more, he allows himself to be taken with the religious sentiments whose expression charms him, and Grace perfecting what Nature had begun he becomes converted to God by a sincere and solid change of heart. Such is the origin of the translation of the Psalter which he afterwards published, and of those profound convictions the generous testimony of which it pleased him to relate in this book.\*

We are not then making the burden of the Breviary heavier when we plead for its grave and careful recitation. On the contrary, never does the Office appear shorter, never has it more charm than when it is recited with respectful attention and wise deliberation: *devotione tranquilla*. And we know no more certain method of making it long and irksome than hurrying to get over it. *Spes quæ differtur, affligit animam*, says the Scripture.† Nothing is so painful as that impatient desire which we cherish and combat at the same time.

Besides, there is no necessity for prolonging the Office immeasurably—nor for meditating upon each verse, nor for observing scrupulously all the pauses marked for its public celebration; but it is essential to avoid everything savouring of haste and all that might produce confusion

\* Devie, *Memorial du Clergé*.

† *Prov. xiii. 12.*

and take from the Spirit of God liberty to act upon our soul. Consequently, it is necessary to renounce from the outset all impatience, all disquieting ardour, and every desire for some other occupation whatever it may be.\* If we find ourselves during the recitation carried away, whether it be suddenly, by some unforeseen idea, or by degrees, by our natural activity of thought, we must repress this movement, return to our first intention, and say to ourselves: "What hurries me?† If I do not keep in view the Will of God I wander and I must return to the right road. If this be what I am aiming at, am I not accomplishing it at this moment? Does God ask of me at the same time two things that are irreconcilable, or can I do better than apply myself entirely to what I am doing?"‡ In the case of distractions becoming too strong and ardour too intemperate, it would be well to pause and say to nature after the example of M. Boudon: "To punish and mortify thee I will go more slowly; I will devote to my Office to-day a longer time than usual".§

Another way of avoiding the risk of precipitation is not to recite by heart any part of the Office and to read verse by verse even the prayers we know the best. S. Charles, S. Philip de Neri, S. Vincent de Paul, observed this method as a law. By this means, in fact, the words striking the eye and ear at the same time are less ex-

\* "Operam detis ut quieti sitis."—*I. Thess. iv. 11.*

† "Sis dominus actionum tuarum et rector, non servus aut emptitus."—*Imit. iii. 38.* "Quicumque Spiritu Dei aguntur hi sunt filii Dei."—*Rom. viii. 14.*

‡ "Age quod agis."—*Imit. lib. iii., cxlvii., No. 2.* "Caveat Martha ne turbetur circa plurima, memor sororis meliorem esse partem."—*S. Basil, in Reg. xx.*

§ *Vie de M. Boudon, archidiacre a Evereux.*

posed to pass unperceived, and the care taken to discover with the glance the word pronounced presents one more obstacle to the tendency of routine. Yet for many persons this might prove a drawback. Père Giry, for instance, thought he recited with more attention what he drew from his memory, because he thus fixed upon his mind all the attention that the reading of the words would have claimed. So he had come to learn his Breviary throughout by heart whilst still in the noviciate.\*

A concluding counsel, and one less subject to exceptions, is this—never to begin the recitation of an ‘Hour’ till we have at our own disposal time sufficient to finish it ; also not to recite successively too large a portion of the Office. On the one hand the fear of not finishing in time, and on the other the fatigue of too long application would almost infallibly induce restlessness and precipitation. We shall have occasion to return to this caution.

\* *Vie du P. Giry Minime, c. iv.* The same remark applies to S. Peter of Alcantara. In the early days of monastic life the religious were bound to learn by heart the whole Psalter: *Discatur Psalterium ad verbum.*—S. Jerom, *Ep. iv., ad Rustic.* Omnis qui sibi nomen monachi vult vindicare totas Psalmos memorialiter teneat.—S. Ferreol, *Reg. c. xi. sæc. vi.* “The Chartreux,” says Mabillon, “have preserved this custom until these latter times.”—See his *Traité des études monast., p. II, c. ii. sec. I.* Several ancient councils make a rule of it for ecclesiastics ; and we see in many places in the works of S. Gregory the Great that he would not have admitted to the priesthood a clerk in default upon this point.—See Thomassin, *Ancienne et nouvelle Discipline, t. I., I., ii. clxxxii., Nos. I-II.*

## CHAPTER IX.

NINTH PRACTICE: TO DETERMINE SOME PARTICULAR PARTS OF THE OFFICE AT WHICH WE WILL AROUSE OUR ATTENTION AND REANIMATE OUR PIETY.

HOWEVER much care we may take at the beginning to recollect ourself and excite our fervour, it is always to be feared lest attention and piety should give way little by little and nature end by asserting its sway. It is in order to remove this danger that the Church has introduced so much variety in the composition of Her Office—that She causes Antiphon to succeed to the Psalm, Instructions to follow Prayers, the Responsories after Hymns, and Exhortations winding up Her Examples and Narratives. For the same reason in Her solemn celebrations She has moments of silence, of secret prayers. She takes care also to vary the tones, chants and postures of Her Ministers; and by the spectacle of these ceremonies She strikes the eye and recalls at every moment our thoughts to God. Unfortunately a portion of this help is lost in private recitation; and as a consequence of the isolation that results, we can conform but imperfectly to the usages of the Choir. What is to be done to remedy this defect? We should adopt the practice recommended by many pious priests; fix beforehand certain points for recollecting ourselves and breaking the natural tendency; we should select as halting-places certain passages, certain verses, certain

words among the more striking ones ; we should likewise so adhere to them that they would never pass unnoticed, and might serve for signals to recall the soul to herself and renew her in her primary dispositions.

One of the most suitable verses to this end is that by which each Hour opens: *Deus in adjutorium meum*. The position it occupies, its signification, the solemn manner in which it is chanted in church, all contribute to mark it to the mind. It is well therefore to habituate ourselves to pronounce it with profound attention and with great fervour. When alone it is an excellent custom to rise in order to recite these words, and to sign ourselves with pious care with the sign of the cross, just as if we were in the Choir. Whilst invoking heavenly aid we thus close the soul against the intrusion of profane thoughts and evil suggestions. S. Catherine, of Sienna, had great confidence in the efficacy of this prayer and repeated it on every occasion. S. Lutgarde declares that she had often seen the devils fly with haste so soon as the prayer begging the divine assistance was begun.\* As to the meaning of these words M. Olier in his *Catechisme chretien pour la vie interieure*, p. 11, c. xiv., advises us to address to the Father the first invocation, *Deus in adjutorium meum intende*, saying from the bottom of our heart: Oh God, cast Thine eyes upon Him Who helps me ; look not upon me, but consider Thy Son Who deigns to make Himself before Thee my aid and assistance—*adjutorium meum*. Then address Jesus Christ: Lord, hasten Thou to my succour. Assist me with Thy Spirit, that I may glorify Thy Father—*Domine ad adjuvandum me festina*. But

\* Thomas de Cantimpre, *Acta Sanctorum*, 16 June.



nothing compels us to thus divide the meaning of this verse. The two invocations may be regarded as a double expression of the same petition, that of obtaining from Our Lord the spirit of prayer of which He possesses the fulness and of which He is the only Source.

Another verse not less fitted to reanimate our piety and which is repeated more frequently, is the doxology with which all the Psalms end, as also all the Hymns and Canticles—*Gloria Patri*.\* . . . Although these words are not taken from Scripture the Church never pronounces them without testifying profound veneration, and there are few in the Office that ought to be dearer to us for the sake of their antiquity and significance.

Some writers assign the honour of originating them to S. Jerome. They say it was S. Damasus who, upon the advice of this Doctor and to oppose a solemn profession of faith to the Arian heresy, established the custom of thus ending the chant of the psalms; however this may be, it is certain that this doxology goes back to a more ancient period than this. As it was the custom of the first Christians to begin each of their actions with the express invocation of the Three Divine Persons in Whose name they had been regenerated, so it was equally the practice of the Bishops and Doctors, particularly in the East, to terminate their instructions by a testimony of veneration or of gratitude towards the Adorable Trinity—Beginning and End of all things.

\* It is repeated more than sixty times in each Office. On the origin of this doxology, see A. Zenedo, *Exercit. Liturg. xxi.*; on its excellence and its significations a little work entitled, *Seraphim Choralis ad alterum clamans et dicens gloria sanctissimæ Trinitati, ab Van Der Donck, frat, Min.* And another under the following title, *Breviarium gloriæ Sanctissimæ Trinitati*: Bruxelles, 1644.



According to S. Basil, the formula even of our doxology goes back to the apostolic age.\* It was not then S. Damasus who composed it or introduced it into the Office, but he sanctioned and generalised its usage; in such wise that it has been specially since his age used throughout the entire Church.

Further, there is no more sublime canticle or one that better answers its end.† The first words recall the chant of the Angels at the Birth of Our Saviour—*Gloria in altissimis Deo*,‡ and that which S. John heard repeated in heaven: *Sedenti in Throno et Agno, Benedictio, et Honor et Gloria*.§ What more fit to raise the soul above the world? . . . The names of the Three Divine Persons—*Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto*, the authentic translation and clear exposition of the triple *Sanctus* whose echo had been caught by Isaias || put us in the presence of Infinite Majesty itself such as faith reveals It to us and as the blessed contemplate It. What could be more powerful to strengthen faith, animate hope, or inflame charity? The conclusion: *Sicut erat*, ex-

\* S. Basil, *de Spiritu Sancto*, cxxvii.

† We read in the 6th lesson of the feast of S. Damasus—"Statuit ut quod pluribus jam locis erat in usu, psalmi per omnes ecclesias die noctuque ab alternis canerentur, et in fine cujusque psalmi diceretur.—*Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto*." And in an epistle which for a long time was thought to be from S. Jerome to this pope—"Istud carmen laudis conjungi præcipias cum psalmo ut fides trecentorum decem et octo Episcoporum Nicæni Concilii pari ore declaretur." According to Cardinal Bona the verse *Sicut erat* might have been added, after the Council of Nice, as a protest against the Arian heresy. However that may be, the usage of the Doxology distinguishes clearly the Christian Worship from that of the Jews. "They sang the psalms in the Synagogue as in the Church," says M. Olier, "but to the psalms the Christians added the *Gloria Patri* to show that their law adds to that of Moses the religion and express worship of Three Divine Persons which, up to that time, had been scarcely distinguished."—*Mystères de N.S.*

‡ *Luc. ii. 14.*

§ *Apoc. v. 13.*

|| *Isaïa vi. 3.*

presses perfectly on one side the Eternity of God and His sovereign independence, on the other the unchangeableness of our Faith and the perpetuity of our Religion. In fine the doxology enunciates with majestic simplicity the most sublime sentiment we can conceive, and the most perfect love of which Our Lord is Himself capable of feeling for His Father. If the nobility of its language results from the elevation of thoughts, what can be more magnificent than these few words where the Supreme Majesty finds the only offering that becomes its greatness, and which its sovereignty demands from every creature.\*

S. Francis of Sales, following the idea of the Church, endeavours to show what this glory is that She wishes to the Almighty for all eternity. "It is not," he says, "only the glory that Jesus Christ renders Him in His humanity and by His saints ; it is a glory incomparably more perfect. The human acts of our Saviour, although infinite in value and merit on account of the Person Who produced them, are not therefore infinite essentially, because

\* A singular fact reported by Voigt, a protestant historian, in the history of S. Gregory VII., authorises the belief that this pope never pronounced these words but with faith and respect. Sent into France, as legate under Victor II., he held for the reform of the clergy a Council at which the Archbishop of Embrun was denounced as guilty of simony. This prelate, informed of the accusation, hastened to purchase with gold the silence of those who were able to convict him ; then presenting himself to the Council, exclaiming with an air of assurance—"Where are my accusers?" But Hildebrand, who had reason to believe him guilty, turning towards him said—"Archbishop ! do you believe the Holy Ghost is God as the Father and the Son are God?" "I believe so," he replied. "Well, then," answered the legate, "recite the *Gloria Patri*." The Simoniacal Bishop pronounced without difficulty—*Gloria Patri et Filio* ; but he could add no more, the Holy Ghost whose gifts he had bought not allowing him to use His name ! Thus convicted the Prelate threw himself at the feet of the legate, and resigned his bishopric ; on doing so he pronounced without difficulty the words indicated. S. Peter Damian and Dictier, Abbot of Mount Cassino, who relate this miracle, had heard the recital of it from the legate's own lips, then become Gregory VII.—*Vie, I. 1er.*

God performs them according to His human nature and substance which is finite. The praise then that proceeds from Jesus Christ, inasmuch as He is Man, not being in every respect infinite, we are obliged to acknowledge that the Divinity is infinitely more worthy of praise than it can be praised even by the Humanity of the Word ; and lastly, we see that God cannot be glorified according to His merit except by Himself—He alone being capable of equaling His goodness by a sovereign praise. In this sense we cry out, *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost*. And that it may be understood that it is not the glory of created praises that we wish to God by these words, but truly the essential and eternal glory which He has in Himself, that comes from Him, and which is Himself, we add : *As it was in the beginning*, etc. And we add this verse to each psalm in order to protest that every praise both human and angelic is but a small thing for God, and that to be worthily praised it is necessary that He should Himself be His glory, His praise, and His benediction.” \*

So that whatever may be the particular object of the Psalm this doxology always sums up and completes its principal meaning ; it is like the abridged expression of the purest sentiments, of the most generous and sublime aspirations that Divine Love can utter.

A religious, of the order of S. Francis, after having long meditated upon these words, put down in writing the pious worship and holy affection towards the adorable Trinity, which they seemed to express to his mind. Afterwards he made a resolution which he prayed God

\* *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu, l. v., c. xii.*

to bless ; it was that he might never pronounce the formula but with the intention to offer to the Three Divine Persons all the desires, all the homage, and every duty of which he had discovered it might be the expression. Each time then that he repeated the *Gloria Patri* we can here see what were his intentions—

1st. To offer to God all the glory which His Son renders to His Infinite Greatness ; whether in eternity as His perfect and uncreated Image ; or in time as the Pattern and Source of all true religion.

2nd. To join himself to all the homage that this His Son, the Blessed Virgin, the Angels and all the Saints of heaven and earth render to Him.

3rd. To wish that God may be known and served by all who do not know Him, and who offend Him ; that is to say, that infidels and heretics may submit to the Faith, and that sinners who dishonour the Church may be converted.

4th. To pray that ecclesiastics and all holy souls should become sanctified from day to day, and glorify God more and more.

5th. To repair as much as possible all the blasphemies, outrages, and sins of every kind, by which the name of God is continually offended.

6th. Lastly, to offer himself to the Divine Trinity with all he had, and with all the zeal possible to honour It, and serve It, whenever It should wish to make use of him.

These intentions were not always present in a distinct manner, but he habitually remembered the offering of them which he had made to God. Moreover he read them over from time to time, and without constraining himself nor thwarting the particular inspirations that

any occurrence might offer to him, he always tried to have one or other to occupy his mind and excite his fervour.

There is nothing to prevent us from following this example.\* If we only by this method become more attentive in pronouncing these words with more intelligence and devotion, this alone would prove a considerable advantage. We read in the life of Bartholmew of the Martyrs, that illustrious and pious bishop, one of the lights of the Council of Trent,† that each time he sang or recited the *Gloria Patri*, he felt such an ardour of soul and experienced so lively a joy, that these sentiments were apparent externally in his face and in the sound of his voice. The same remark has been made in the case of P. Serarius, a religious of the Society of Jesus, a man of great knowledge and eminent piety. "It is impossible to express," says the Pere Saint Jure,‡ with what ardent devotion and with what bursts of heart and mind he said or heard these grand words. On feast days, especially when he heard them sung with more than ordinary solemnity, he could no longer contain himself; the delight of his soul burst forth in spite of himself and bore him away into a pious ecstasy."

Another not less praiseworthy practice is to incline

\* Certain doctors inclined by disposition and party spirit, to note the fancies of pious persons, have spoken with much contempt upon the subject of such compacts. It is possible that but moderately enlightened minds might exaggerate their merit and efficacy; but they do not ordinarily speaking the less suffice to afford two very considerable advantages; on the one hand, they possess much merit in God's estimation since they testify of an ardent love for Him; on the other, they dispose proximately the soul to produce on occasion many holy aspirations and acts of real virtue. Cf. Lëssius, *de Përfëctionibus divinis*, l. xii., c. xxx., No. 168.

† See his *Life*, l. iv., c. xxiii.-iv.

‡ *L'Homme Spirituel*, p. 11, c. v.



the head when pronouncing these words according to the choir rubric. S. Francis of Hieronymo never neglected to do so. By arousing the attention this mark of religion helps us to enter into the sentiments of respect and humility which it expresses; and so by our attitude, as well as by our words, we imitate the angels and blessed in heaven: *Cum darent gloriam Sediti super thronum, procidebant et adorabant Viventem in sæcula sæculorum. Ceciderunt in conspectu throni dicentes: Benedictio et Claritas. . . . Deo nostro in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.\** To this general signification we may add another more particular and more precise. One day when S. Magdalen of Pazzi bent herself thus, with more than ordinary earnestness, one of her Sisters inquired the reason for this observance. "It is," she replied, "a practice I have, through my confessor, to offer my life to the Holy Trinity in bending my head at the *Gloria Patri* as if I were presenting it to the executioner to undergo martyrdom."†

By the same inclination of the head, a pious priest proposed to himself to honour the self-abasement of the Son of God, descending from heaven in order to restore to His Father that glory of which the pride of man had robbed Him; and he united himself in this manner to the homage which the Incarnate Word offered to the Divine Majesty. Another, more inclined to compunction, put himself in the disposition of a useless and guilty servant who offers himself to the Divine Justice to undergo the punishment due to his negligence and faults.

The blessed Jordan, successor of S. Dominic in the go-

\* *Apoc. iv. 9, viii. 11.*

† *Acta Sanct. 25 May.*—*Vie*, par le P. Cepari, her confessor.



vernment of his order, had the custom to implore at this moment, the blessing of the ever August Trinity. Once, on the eve of the Purification, God rewarded him with an extraordinary favour. As the Invitatory was being sung in the choir: *Ecce venit ad templum sanctum suum*, he saw the Blessed Virgin come down from heaven and seat Herself with our Saviour upon a throne that Angels had prepared for them. They both looked benignly upon each of the religious; then, when these having finished the *Venite, exultemus* . . . bowed whilst singing the *Gloria Patri*, Jordan saw the Mother of God take the Hands of Her Son and bless them sweetly—making the sign of the cross over them.\* Next after the *Deus in adiutorium* and the *Gloria Patri* the means most proper to awaken our piety are the prayers or particular petitions which are offered on the occasion of the Office celebrated. As they conclude the ‘Hours’ so they should assure the fruit of these. Accordingly the Church marks them out in a special manner for our devotion. First She announces the prayers as an im-

\* *Acta S.S. 15 February.*—The venerable Bede—the man of prayer—according to his name, loved the doxology. He died whilst repeating it on the eve of the Ascension, 26th May, 735, after the first vespers; according to the account of his disciple Cuthbert. “Vere fateor quia neminem unquam oculis meis vidi nec auribus audivi tam diligenter gratias Deo Vivo referre. O vere beatus vir! Canebat Antiphonas. . . . quarum una est: *O Rex gloriæ, Domine virtutum qui triumphator hodie super omnes cælos ascendisti; ne derelinquas nos orphanos!* Et cum venisset ad illud: *Ne derelinquas nos*—prorupit in lacrymas multumque flevit et post horam cœpit repetere quæ inchoaverat. Feria quarta ante Ascensionem præcepit diligenter scribi quæ ceperamus. Ad vesperam puer Wilbert dixit: *Modo sententia descripta est.* Ille autem: Bene, ait, consummatum est. Et sic in pavimento suæ casulæ decantans: *Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritu Sancto*, cum Spiritum Sanctum nominasset, spiritum exhalavit ultimum atque ut sine dubio credendum est, pro eo quod hic semper devotissimus in Dei laudibus laboraverat ad gaudia desideriorum celestium migravit.” *Act. S.S. 27 May.* Item S. Oswald, *Ep. Ebor. 992, 18 Oct.*

portant act. She invites us to reanimate within ourselves the desire for heavenly graces : *Oremus*. Then, if the Office is conducted in choir, all standing in a religious posture, She causes its words to be pronounced in a loud voice by him who presides. And as he who prays holds the place of Our Lord praying for His members, it obliges him to make an express act of self-renunciation and of union with the Son of God : *Per Dominum* . . . acknowledging that he speaks in the name of this Divine Head, that he leans on His merits for support and that he has no hope but in His mediation.

It is of great importance to enter into this spirit and to habituate oneself to say all these words, particularly in public, with a deep interior sentiment ; and not as sometimes happens with precipitation and negligence as though it were a vulgar formality—a sort of transition between the Office and some more pressing occupation. If we do not kneel whilst reciting it would be well at least to remain standing. We cannot be too careful to pronounce with affection this first word, *Oremus*, addressing it to ourself as though it were an exhortation, and reminding us that we have not to pray alone or for a particular interest, but with Jesus Christ and for all the Church—*Quoniam per Jesum habemus accessum in uno Spiritu ad Patrem*.\*

Not to omit anything that may be useful, let us remark, with many authors, that it is a good thing to accustom ourselves to pronounce with a special devotion certain words and certain verses. S. Liguori, who insists upon this advice, notes to this end, referring them to

\* *Ephes. ii. ; Rom. v. 1.*

several heads, the most remarkable expressions of confidence, humility, love, &c., that present themselves in the Psalms.\* We refrain from quoting these passages because the impression they produce is not the same in every one, and because the choice of each should be guided by his own disposition and observations. But there are words that all should strive to pronounce with attention: those that recall the principal objects that ought to occupy us during prayer: God,† Our Lord, and ourselves. Never should we invoke God without profound humility, nor name Jesus Christ without a lively gratitude, nor speak of *ourselves* without a sincere sentiment of lowliness and fraternal charity.

We know that feelings vary and that it is not possible to be always moved in the same manner by the same object. Accordingly we only here ask for attention of mind. But we should desire that it should extend to everything of a nature to elevate and touch the heart. It sometimes happens that we are touched at a moment when we least expected. A verse which we may have said a hundred times with indifference sends out a spark that lights up and inflames our hearts. It is perhaps some truth of which hitherto we had not felt the import-

\* See his *Opusculum, sur l'Office Divin*. We find a like catena of divers sentiments expressed by the Psalmist in Alvarez De Paz, *De studio orationis*, and in Bellecus, *De la solide piété*.

† S. Charles never pronounced the name of God without uncovering himself. It is related of a holy priest of the last century that he had so great a respect for this adorable name that it was a kind of torture to him to hear it given to the idols of Paganism. "We ought never," says he, "to pronounce this word without a profound devotion. It is a blasphemy to give the name of the Almighty to fabulous personages that crime and passion would deify." *Vie de M. Delalande, curé de Grigny*, par M. Ameline, 1773.

ance, or else it is a striking application that we take in for the first time.\*

At whatever time the Holy Ghost thus speaks to the soul He requires us to listen to Him.† We must use His Light whilst it shines; we must not only receive but we must also relish His favours.‡ The moments we thus pass in listening to the voice of God are not only most consoling but they are without comparison the most salutary and fruitful of all the moments of our life: *Magister intus est. § Beata anima quæ Dominum in se loquentem audit. Beatæ plane aures quæ venas divini sussuri suscipiunt.*||

Such were the sentiments of the pious Galleman, the first superior of the Carmelites in France, the friend of

\* The words of Scripture, says M. Olier, act upon the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not the connection of ideas nor reasoning that produce these supernatural effects, but truly the Holy Ghost who makes use of the smallest words for the good of the Church.—*Memoires, t. ii. p. 395.*

It needed but a single verse to convert S. Augustine, as a look only from our Saviour sufficed to raise up again S. Peter after his fall. One word from the Gospel heard by S. Paulinus, *Adhuc unum tibi deest . . .* turned a senator and one of consular rank into a poor follower of Jesus Christ. S. Greg. Tur. *de Gloria Confess. c. cvii.* A maxim of S. John—*Nolite diligere mundum . . .* snatched from the world S. Nicholas of Tolentino and buried him in the cloister. *Act. S.S. 10 Sept.* Once a young worldling hearing read in a lesson of the Office the 6th chapter of Genesis, wherein are related the long life and death of the Patriarchs, was struck by the invariable repetition of the same formula—*Factum est tempus quod vixit Adam nonginti triginta anni, et mortuus est. Facti sunt dies Seth nonginti et duodecimo anni, et mortuus est. Facti sunt dies Enoch nonginti quinque anni et mortuus est. . . .* He said to himself: And we whose lives are so short in comparison, what will then become of us? Then, after reflecting over this thought, he resolved to leave the world and enter the Order of S. Dominic. *Vie des Fr. Dominicains, p. iv. c. x.; Vie de F. Guerrie.*

† “Qui habet aures audiendi audiat.”—*Apoc. ii. 7.* “Quidquid boni cogitaverit homo subito corde percussus, sciat quia hospes illi venit de cœlo.”—*S. Aug. in Luc. xi.*

‡ “Mel invenisti; comede quod sufficit.”—*Prov. xxv. 16.*

§ S. Aug., *Tract. iii. in I. Joan c. ii.* || *Imit. iii. 1.*

S. Francis de Sales and of S. Vincent de Paul. He recited his Office with a respect and attention like to an angel's, says his historian; and whilst saying it he often received such powerful attractions of the Spirit of God that in order to allow of their free action upon his soul he was sometimes obliged to make a pause of a whole hour's duration.\* Such also was the practice of a pious prelate of the same period, Jean Baptiste Gault, bishop of Marseilles, who died in the reputation of sanctity. When he came to a verse in the psalms that particularly touched him by arousing in him a lively sentiment of trust, wonder, or love for God—instead of remaining standing, the arms crossed—as he ordinarily held himself in prayer, he would throw himself on his knees to produce these acts with greater respect, and to meditate upon what the Spirit of God put into his heart; so that sometimes it took him three hours for the recitation of the Breviary, and then he arose from it with admirable lights and consolations. "When you say the Office alone, he remarks, you are not interrupting or distracting yourself when you thus stop at an affection or a pious thought. You rather conform thereby to Holy Scripture which advises us to meditate night and day upon the Word of God, and to seek therein all those lights we require." He added that he took this practice from Cardinal de Bérulle, and P. de Condren, men whom he esteemed as incomparable and, so to say, divine.†

\* *La vie du venerable pretre de Jesus Christ, M. Gallemant, p. 11, c. i., sect. 4.* "There were some prayers in particular in which he took so much pleasure that he did not tire of repeating them several times a day; as that of the Sunday in the octave of the Blessed Sacrament—*Sancti tui nominis Domine timorem pariter et amorem fac nos habere perpetuum*" . . .

† *Life de Mgr. J. B. Gault, par le Fr. Marchetti, l. iii. sect. xix.* William



We will here conclude this account of practices most familiar to holy priests in regard to the Breviary. To produce their effect they only require to be used with a sustained fidelity. The only recommendation that remains for us to give is not to limit yourselves to employing them at the beginning or during a longer or shorter time, but to be always faithful to them, and to persevere in them for life. Having ever the same difficulties to overcome it is necessary always to have the same methods for use, and the same precautions to follow.

This, in our opinion, is a subject for most important examination for an ecclesiastic. He must not be content with self-examination at the end of each 'Hour' to ask himself how he has performed it; from time to time, in his monthly retreats, especially in the annual one, it is right for him to consider what is his habitual conduct in this respect, what is his progress or default, his negligence or his fervour.\* And if he discover any unfaithfulness, if he has abandoned some practice, or omitted some precaution—far from resigning himself to laxity of conduct he should ask pardon of God—return to his accustomed habits, and watch closer

of Malmsbury says of S. Wulstan, bishop of Worcester, "Equo quoque vadens, Psalterium frequentabat, orationales versus qui occurrebant ad fastidium concantantis crebro repetens."—*De gestis Pontificum Anglorum, lib. iv.* In the life of the B. Mary of the Incarnation, we read that on the eve of All Saints, 1616, she was so filled with devotion and spiritual joy, that speaking to one of the Sisters, she repeated two or three times in a holy transport of delight the Antiphon of Lauds—*Vidi turbam magnam quam dinumerare nemo poterat, &c.* Then she added, *Oh, holy assembly! Oh, blessed eternity! Oh, holy place, where there is chanted incessantly Sanctus, and this great Alleluia!*  
 . . . *Liv. iii., c. iv.*

\* "Ingemisæ et dole quod sis adhuc tam negligens in Horis persolvendis, tam raro pleni tibi collectus, tam festinus ad finem."—*Imit. iv. 7.*



to preserve himself against such faults.\* To take this care is painful, no doubt it requires courage, constancy, and unshaken will; but the importance of the result must not be forgotten. The spirit of prayer is so precious that we cannot obtain it at too great a price, and the duty attaching to the Divine Office is so serious a one for a priest that he cannot do too much to discharge it in a becoming manner.

\* "Volo vos non pascere vobis sed accusare vosmetipsas, quoties forte in vobis vel ad modicum torpere gratiam, virtutem que languescere videtur, sicut ego pro hujusmodi meipsum accuso."—S. Bern. *in Cant. Serm. liv.*

## TREATISE THE FOURTH.

*Some edifying Examples of the recitation of the  
Divine Office.*

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### CHAPTER I.

INSTANCES GATHERED FROM THE HISTORY OF THE  
CHURCH UP TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

IN the preceding pages we have collected the maxims derived from the conduct and doctrine of holy ecclesiastics ; and we have always cited their example in support of our assertions. However, we think we shall be doing both what is agreeable and useful to our readers in concluding this first part of our work by a series of edifying instances fitted to enforce the advice we have given to fix it in their memory, and inspire a holy zeal to put it into practice.

We would like to relate in the foremost place the fine examples offered us both by the lives of the early solitaries, or by the history of the religious orders at every age of the Church ; but, as they nearly all relate to the public celebration of the Divine Office, and our concern is chiefly with its private recitation we feel obliged to renounce this rich store, and refer those of our readers who might regret this arrangement to the writers who have treated upon the 'Hours' with reference to their choral celebration.\*

\* See Cassian, *Institutions* I. and II. ; and Card. Bona, *De Divina Psalmodia*, last chapter.

## § I.

What is most remarkable, particularly in the earliest times, is the deep piety with which this great duty was discharged. We find that the Office in private was really in the eyes of the holy clergy but the supplement of the public Office, and that in its recital were observed, as much as possible, all the regulations prescribed for the solemn celebration in choir.

S. Ludger, at one time a disciple of Alcuin, afterwards Apostle of Saxony and Bishop of Münster (749-809), was remarkable among all the prelates of his day for his esteem for public prayer, and by his religious punctuality in performing it. On one occasion, when he had resorted to the Court of Charlemagne in order to justify himself in the matter of an accusation made against him, that prince sent one of his officers to him saying he expected him at his audience. Ludger was occupied with his Office. He replied to the messenger that he would appear as soon as he had finished. As he delayed to come, the officer came to summon him a second time ; then a third time. At last he made his appearance, and the emperor, somewhat angrily, asked him what it was that made him to keep his sovereign waiting in this manner. "Prince," replied the bishop, "I feel what I owe to your majesty, but I thought it was due to God to give Him the preference. When in His presence is it not right to forget everything else? Moreover, I have only conformed to your intentions, for it was you who in naming me a bishop, have freed me from the slavery of the world to consecrate myself to the Divine Service."\*

\* S. Bonaventure cites an example of the same kind. "Parisiis ut fertur cum quidam theologus unius Horæ Canonicæ incœpisset officium superveniente

On another occasion, being on a journey, Ludger went one evening into an inn, and having a room and fire made ready he began to recite Matins with his clerks. Whilst they were praying together, a brand or two fell from the chimney, and rolling out of the hearth, filled all the room with smoke. The saint appeared not to notice it. He remained standing in his place, making no movement whatever and without showing that anything troubled him ; but one of the clerks who accompanied him less patient picked up the brands, and replacing them on the hearth, took some time in rekindling the fire. The pious bishop let him do it without making any remark at the time ; but next morning, having summoned the ecclesiastic, he asked him how he could have dared to interrupt the Office for such a cause. "Then, after a sharp rebuke," says the author of his life, "he imposed a penance of some days upon

Episcopo ad loquendum cum eo, caput sine locutione inclinans Horam inceptam Episcopo expectante, finivit causam subinferens quod majoro Domino loquebatur."—*Specul. descip ad novit*, p. 1, c. xvi. Nowadays no such scruple is felt at interrupting the Office. Yet we find in the life of a venerable religious of the last century, P. Gourdan, a remarkable example of this respect for the public celebration of the Office. As he had a great reputation for virtue (it was said that his brother Santeul sang the praises of the saints and that he imitated them) the Duc de Villeroi brought one day the king, Louis XV., then of age, to see him. It was the hour of vespers. The porter was told to inform the Father that his majesty asked for him. The porter replied : "It is of no use, for if it were the Pope himself Father Gourdan would not come out until the Office is finished. I can only get the Prior to come to you." In fact not until the Office was ended did the holy monk appear. Then he presented himself, conversed with the king in the most edifying manner, and the latter touched by his words recommended himself to his prayers. When subsequently he was accused of keeping the king waiting, the king observed—"He was right, he was serving a Master whom I ought to serve myself". From that time the king sent him every year by his First Groom of the Chamber his blessed taper on Candlemas Day.—*Life of the F. Simon Gourdan, chan, reg de S. Victor, 1755.*

him, to teach his clergy with what fidelity they ought to try to shun all levity and distraction during prayer." \*

In the twelfth century we find at Citeaux the same respect for the Divine Office. In private, as in choir, the monks under S. Bernard never began it but on their knees. Even when travelling they did not consider themselves dispensed from this rule. If they were on horseback they dismounted, that they might not transgress it.† One of the reproaches which they made to the Religious of Cluny was that they did not observe as they did at Citeaux this precept of their patriarch S. Benedict.‡ We see in the writings of Peter the Venerable in what terms and with what measure this abbot justifies his brethren in this matter. "Wherever we may be we observe our rule, and before beginning the Office we place ourselves on our knees with profound respect—*Cum timore divino*. If we happen sometimes to omit it, it is under exceptional circumstances, on account of rain, snow, or such,—*ob nimiam imbrem, aut nevim, aut lutulentum*, and then we recite the *Miserere* to compensate for this omission." §

## § II.

S. Francis of Assisi took pains to inspire the Friars-minors with the same spirit of religion; and he constantly gave them the example of it. He never sat whilst saying the Office. Ordinarily he stood up bare-headed, his eyes looking up to heaven, often bathed with

\* *Act. S.S.* 26 March.

† J. D. Dalgairn's *Life of S. Stephen Harding, founder of the Order of Citeaux*: Lyons, 1846.

‡ S. Bern., *Apologia ad Guillelmum, S. Theodorici abbatem*.

§ *Epist. xxviii., lib. 1*; *ad Bern., abb. Cist.*

tears, without ever ceasing and without helping himself by any support whatever even when ill. When travelling, he would stop in order to recite it with more recollection, and, whatever the weather, he did not continue his journey until he had finished it. "We stop readily enough," he said, "for the refectation of the body ; why then should we refuse to the soul the leisure it requires to take its nourishment and repair its strength?"

He recited the psalms with so much fervour that he seemed to behold with his eyes the Divine Majesty. The *Gloria Patri* in particular inspired him with the liveliest devotion ; he could never tire of repeating it, and he exhorted every one to say it frequently. Once when he desired to return thanks to God for a special favour, he ordered the *Magnificat* to be said by one of his friars, he himself saying a *Gloria Patri* between each verse. He likewise much recommended meditation upon this doxology. To one of his brethren who was very desirous to learn he said, "Study well the *Gloria Patri* ; in it you will find the whole substance of the Scriptures".

Whenever he met with the name of Our Lord in the Breviary, he seemed in pronouncing it to relish it with delight. But it was above all the name of *Jesus* that excited his transports. Each time it arose upon his lips or struck his ears, this Divine name seemed to inundate with joy his soul and his senses.\* His face

\* A sentiment common to all holy priests, beginning with the Apostles. S. Paul repeated this name nearly four hundred times in his Epistles. S. Augustine objected to our Vulgate that it had put the word *salutare* in some places instead of that of *Jesus* : *quod est nobis amicus et dulcius nominare*, said he.—*Cf. De Civ. Dec. I, xviii., c. xxxii. ; Conf. 2, iii., c. iv., No. 8.*



then assumed an expression of happiness unspeakable. One might say that he had put to his lips an inebriating cup of delight or that he was ravished at the sound of a heavenly harmony.

He never could pardon himself for the least distraction if voluntary ; and far from closing his eyes upon those that might take him by surprise, he never failed to confess them, and to punish himself for them. Accordingly, it was but rarely that he was troubled with them. One day in Lent, as he was engaged, before the hour of Tierce, in making a piece of furniture out of wood, the thought of it returned during the Office and engaged his thoughts for some time. No sooner had he returned to his cell than he took up this work, to which he feared he had become too much attached, and threw it into the fire, saying, " I desire to sacrifice to the Lord that which impedes the worship of the Lord ".

When he was ill, and perceiving that he was at death's door, the Seraphic Father began to recite the cxli. psalm : "*Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi*," . . . and having come to these words : "*Educ de custodia animam meam ad confitendum nomini tuo*," he gave up his soul and returned to his Maker.\*

### § III.

The respect and devotion with which so many holy priests celebrated the Divine Office in those ages of faith, had served to inspire the faithful with the highest

"Alas," sometimes said a pious ecclesiastic of the 17th century whilst assisting at certain sermons, "will not the name of Jesus soon occur."—Hanart, *Recueil des vies di bons prêtres, M. Roupier*, in 4<sup>o</sup>.

\* S. Bonar, *de vita S. Francisci, c. x.*—*Ann. Minorum, t. i., ann. 1221-23.*

esteem for it ; and it was not uncommon to find mere layman and princes even imitate them in this respect with a piety worthy to be, in its turn, proposed as a model for imitation. This is particularly the case in the Life of S. Elzéar, Count of Provence, in the fourteenth century (1285-1323). Though he was intrusted with many offices and important affairs and often employed in the Courts of Naples and of France, he recited every day all the canonical Hours ; and with such devotion that, not content with remaining on his knees, says his biographers, he bent himself to the earth to pray with more humility. His habitual disposition was that of Abraham, saying to God from the depth of his nothingness : *Loquar ad Dominum, cum sum pulvis et cinis.*\* He pronounced all the prayers with as much modesty as fervour. He would have reproached himself had he omitted the least syllable, and all who saw him were penetrated with respect and devotion.† But let us rather consider the examples offered to us by the sacerdotal order.

\* *Gen. xviii. v. 27.*

† *Vie de S. Elzéar*, par le P. Eb. Binet. *Acta S.S. Sept. 27.* This devotion, uniting with the clergy by the daily recital of the Church Office, was formerly much in request among the pious laity. Traces of it still lingered in the last century.—*Vie de M. Vianney*, par M. Monnin, t. ii. c. ii. But it is particularly in the history of the middle ages that we find illustrious examples of it. It is related of S. Radegonde that she was as punctual in reciting the Hours as the most fervent ecclesiastic. S. Louis never missed it, even when travelling, and he caused the Office of the B. Virgin to be recited by his children. The princess Isabella, his sister, shared in this devotion. Such also was the practice of S. Gerald, Count of Aurillac, of the brave Simon de Montfort, of Godfrey de Bouillon, of William the Conqueror, of Richard and Henry III., kings of England, of the Emperor Lothain, of the Empresses Agnes and Matilda, mother of Otho I., of Ferdinand the Great of Castille, of Isabella, queen of Castille and of Aragon, of S. Hedwige, duchess of Poland, etc.—See Thomassin, *Ancienne et nouvelle Discipline.*

## § IV.

S. Thomas, of Villa Nova, Archbishop of Valencia, at the beginning of the sixteenth century (1485-1555), was in the habit of reciting the Divine Office with so much fervour that he arose from it with his heart as much touched by it as by the highest contemplations.

One morning, the Feast of the Ascension, he was quietly walking in the corridors of the Episcopal palace reciting with his chaplain Bovillo the Little Hours. Having come to this antiphon : *Videntibus illis elevatus est*, he stopped all of a sudden, and ravished in ecstasy he was raised up from the ground many arms length. He remained thus straight and suspended in the air from six o'clock in the morning until five o'clock in the evening. Many persons belonging to the house, and others, hastened to the spot and saw him in this state. When he had come to himself again he inquired of the chaplain, with whom he had began his Hours, and who had not left him : "Where were we in our Office?" The chaplain having replied, "We were just beginning *Mirabilia*, and your lordship was saying the Antiphon : *Videntibus illis*". . . . "Very well," said the Archbishop, "let us finish so as to say Mass and go to the choir." "As for that, my lord, we must not think of it." "Why?" "Why it is now evening, and the cathedral bell has just rung for Compline." "Let us then finish None with the remainder of the Office," replied the prelate, with astonishment. "I am sorry for all this, for you especially, who have not said Mass; but God has willed it so without any fault on your side or mine." Later, as his chaplain was beseeching him to tell him

the secret of this ecstasy—"Know then, brother, that so soon as I had began the Antiphon, I heard a choir of heavenly spirits take it up and chant it in the air with a song so sweet and melodious that it entirely ravished me—taking away the use of my senses. I am surprised, however, that so long a time had elapsed—it seemed to me as though it had not lasted more than half an hour. But such is the charm of Divine consolations, so delightful are they that a day passes like a moment."\*

\* *Act. Sanct. 18 Sept.* This fact is reported by Boville himself and attested in the bull of canonization of the saint. We could have mentioned a number of priests who had the joy of hearing the angels sing the praises of God. It is related in the life of S. Gudual, bishop of S. Malo, that in a sea voyage which he took to go and preach the Gospel, as he was reciting aloud his Office on board the ship, he heard angels who answered him verse for verse, to the end.—*Act. Sanct. 6 June.* In the history of S. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury in the tenth century, we read that this holy bishop having one day at his house some of his friends, a harp upon which he played sometimes and which was hung up against the wall, began to produce sounds of wonderful sweetness, whilst at the same time a sweet and angelic voice intoned the Anthem—*Gaudent in cælis qui Christi vestigia sunt secuti.* Thomas de Cantempre, a dominican of the thirteenth century, mentions also a canon regular who, in a moment of affliction caused by an unjust persecution, received a like favour on entering the church of S. Maurice at Lille.—*Bonum univ., lib. i., c. xi., No. 3.* Similar examples are found in the history of S. Andrew Avelino, 9 November, lec. vi. ; of S. Peter Nolasco, 11 November, lec. v. ; of S. Colette, of S. Magdalene of Pazzi, of the venerable Mother Agnes of Jesus, and also of S. J. F. de Chantal and the Abbé de Rancé. "Scarcely had the walls of the Visitation House of Autun risen out of the ground than there began to be heard there concerts and harmonies which were humanly speaking, inexplicable. Later, when the nuns had taken possession of the Convent, there was often heard a supernatural voice joining itself to the Sisters' who sang in the choir. It sang an octave higher than all the others and it caused in the souls of those who heard it so sweet a feeling of the presence of God, that it seemed to them as though they were in Paradise."—*Histoire de Sainte Chantal, t. ii. c. xxiv.* One day, the monks of La Trappe being in choir to the number of more than fifty, the Abbot de Rancé at their head, all believed they distinctly heard the angels singing their melody, and the voice of these celestial spirits mingling with their own. When it was related to the Abbot, he said he thought he also had heard it, but that such a favour was above their merits. On another

This fact leaves nothing to be desired on the score of certainty nor for its details. Those that follow refer to the same period and are not less authentic.

## § V.

There is a life of S. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus (1491-1556), by Ribadeneyra, one of his first companions who lived long with him on the most intimate terms. This historian attests that God had given at his ordination to his holy founder such a love for the Divine Office that he would have wished to have spent the entire day over it. At each verse God imparted to him so many lights, his heart tasted so many consolations, that he was compelled to pause and allow his tears to flow. His religious fearing he might thus lose his sight caused him to abstain by dispensation from the obligation of the Breviary. But the saint addressing the Almighty obtained the grace to moderate his tears without losing any of his feelings and intense joy.\*

But the spirit of the founder was continued in his Society. S. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) had so great an esteem for the Divine Office that he never began one of the Hours without preparing himself for it by reciting the *Veni Creator*; and he made this prayer with such ardour, his face seemed so to glow with it, that one might say the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon him. He

occasion it seemed to them as if the whole choir, from treble to bass, was but one voice, and that in the vaulted roof of the church there was another whose sweet melody was extraordinary, and yet accorded perfectly with that of the religious. *Vie de Dometim de Rancé*, par D. Pierre Le Nain, t. ii. ch. vi., 1719.

\* See his *Life* by Ribadeneyra, l. vi. ; also Laines.



found moreover such consolation in the Office, he drew from it so many graces, that notwithstanding the greatness of his zeal and extent of his occupations, he could never induce himself to use the permission he had received on his departure for his missions to replace the ordinary Breviary by one more concise, then of recent origin, and the use of which was then beginning to spread.\*

Father Fabre,† who joined S. Ignatius at the same time as S. F. Xavier, was equally remarkable for his devotion to the Divine Office. In order to become more attentive whilst reciting it, he would imagine that he saw near him on one side his good angel who collected all his good thoughts and pious sentiments; on the other the devil who took note of all his distractions. Not satisfied with exciting himself when beginning to recite well his Hours, he stopped at each *Gloria Patri* to renew his fervour and implore the spirit of prayer. *Pater da mihi spiritum bonum*, said he, recalling the word of Our Lord in the Gospel: *Si vos cum sitis mali nostis bona, data dare filiis vestris, quanto magis Pater vester cœlistis de cœlo dabit spiritum bonum petentibus se!*‡ Then he excited himself to recite well the psalm he was going to begin. “At least,” said he, “let me say properly this one,” *Confirma me Deus in hac hora.*§ Thus he succeeded in becoming entirely master of himself and of

\* *Acta Sancti. 3 Dec.* Vies par le P. Tomsel, last book, et par le P. Bonhoms, liv. vi. Suarez, who had the same privilege, observed the same course of conduct.

† The religious of whom S. Francis de Sales speaks with so much praise, in many of his writings, and in whose parish he rejoiced to have consecrated a church. *Intro. à la vie devote, p. 11, ch. xvi.*

‡ *Luc. xi. 12.* § *Judith xiii. 29.*



his imagination and in being able to pray to God with a recollection and fervour of mind that nothing could disturb.\*

## §. VI.

About the same time F. Balthasar Alvarez, one of those whose virtue was most esteemed by S. Teresa (1533-1580), gave a no less edifying example. To celebrate Mass and the Divine Office were ever his most cherished occupation: *Panem cœlestem accipiam*, said he every morning, *et nomen Domini invocabo* (Miss. Can.). Notwithstanding the number and importance of his occupations, he had made himself a rule never to say but one 'Hour' at a time, and he recited it as gravely and as calmly as if he had nothing else to do. He was never seen fulfilling this duty walking in public places nor even in the passages of the house in which he might perhaps find some cause of distraction. He chose rather a solitary spot; ordinarily he remained on his knees. When his increasing infirmities obliged him to sit, he took a mere stool without any support, and remained bare-headed, well knowing that devotion is much promoted by external respect in demeanour. Often to animate himself the more, he would say to himself "The Angels ought to be my models, since I do on earth what they are doing in Heaven. But, how do they comport themselves in the presence of God? With great purity of heart and in the most profound respect; what a shame is it for me if lacking as I do their heavenly purity I do not at least imitate their profound devotion."

He did not like to perform this duty with others, be-

\* *Life*, by P. Orlandin.

cause he preferred to devote to it as much time as possible, and taste in secret the sentiments which the Holy Ghost infused into his soul ; but it was easy to judge what lights he received in this holy exercise by the frequent use he made of the psalms in his exhortations and by the deep meanings he discovered in them. This arose from the attention he gave to each verse and the care he took to measure and enjoy their least words.\*

### § VII.

F. Louis Dupont (1554-1624), who wrote the *Life of Balthasar Alvarèz*, after having long been his disciple, showed himself to be in this respect the inheritor of his spirit. He loved to say his Office kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament ; it was there that in this position he ordinarily recited it. When illness prevented his leaving his room, he took care to turn towards the High Altar of the Chapel where Our Lord reposed. No noise could make him turn his head nor raise his eyes. Often when some one knocked he did not hear it ; and if they entered his room whilst he was praying he requested by sign that he might be permitted to finish.

Occasionally the weakness produced by illness required him to have the aid of some Father ; but those who helped him to recite, thought themselves well repaid for their trouble by the profit they derived from being witnesses of his fervour and sharing his devotion. When asthma, from which he suffered, prevented him from articulating his prayer, he caused the Breviary to be placed before him, and then recited it mentally with as much piety as if he had said it aloud. It was useless

\* See his *Life* by P. Louis Dupont, ch. vi.

for his doctors to repeat that he was not bound to the Office, and that such occupation might injure him ; he would not believe them, because a better physician from Heaven had inspired him with a contrary conviction, and his superiors permitted him to follow the heavenly impulse.

At certain verses of the Psalms P. Dupont paused, and his whole exterior reflected the sentiments of devotion with which his heart was penetrated. This was specially remarked when he pronounced the *Gloria Patri* and the words : *Venite adoremus et procidamus ante Deum* of the Invitatory. One day, F. John de Vernandez who looked after his health, coming to inquire if he wanted anything, heard whilst opening the door a rather loud noise as if something heavy had shaken the floor whilst falling. Fearing some accident, he hastened to enter ; but he found the sick man reciting half aloud the passage of the Office : *Venite adoremus et procidamus*. It was he who, in falling on his knees in the ardour these words had inspired him with, had caused this sound. A bright light surrounded him down to his breast and extended two arms length above his head. At this sight P. Vernandez, struck with fear withdrew, closing the door. A few moments later, fearing he might have been deceived by his imagination, he again opened the door, and the same sight presented itself. Dupont, kneeling and shining with light as before, was finishing aloud the recitation of the Invitatory.

Still, whatever ease he might find in his intercourse with God,\* he never neglected any practices calculated

\* His *Meditations sur la Foi* upon the perfections of God and the mysteries of our Lord are a source of the most pious sentiments, and at the same time, a treasure-house of doctrine uniting solidity with abundance.

to sustain his attention and nourish his piety. Here are some which were found written with his own hand in his journal ; no doubt he loved to conform to them :—

“ The first method of reciting well the Office consists in directing our attention, at the beginning of each psalm, to one of the three Persons of the Trinity. The psalms being grouped in threes, we offer the first to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost. At the end we reiterate this homage to the Person to whom we had offered it, and ask of Him, if we wish to do so, some favour. During the recitation, we limit ourselves to remarking whatever may have special reference to that Divine Person, whether in the invocations or in the praises. We may also recite each of the three psalms in honour of the B. Virgin, of some saint, or of our Angel Guardian.

“ The second consists in offering to God each psalm to thank Him for some particular favour, for example, for our creation, redemption, and vocation, or for our Baptism, Penance, and the Eucharist, &c. At the end of the psalm we pray that we may ever esteem this benefit as it merits, and may ever make a good use of it.

“ The third consists in offering each psalm to God in order to obtain some virtue ; for example, the first, to obtain humility ; the second, that we may have faith ; the third, that we may acquire obedience ; and so of the rest. In reciting the psalm, we seek for anything referring to the virtue we have in view, and we repeat our petition at the end.

“ Lastly, the fourth method is to say each psalm in honour of some mystery of Our Lord, and to beseech Him at the end to grant us the love, esteem, and spirit

of this mystery. Thus, we should recite the first psalm in honour of the Incarnation, the second in honour of the Nativity, the third in honour of the Circumcision, and so on, never omitting to ask at the end the grace to esteem, love, and spiritually to understand the mystery we intend to honour." \*

These practices, inspired by the spirit of prayer, cannot but prove a source of blessing for those who have the courage to conform themselves to them in a faithful manner.

### § VIII.

To these excellent models we might add many others belonging to the same Society. Father Barradius,† who has left us some learned commentaries upon the Gospels, and who even during his missions devoted no less than six hours a day to the Canonical Hours. F. J. Anchieta (1534-1597), the Apostle and Thaumaturgus of Brazil, whose devotion God rewarded by miraculous favours;‡ also F. Lessius, who said he could not understand how it was that so many priests who were full of zeal for prayers and pious practices of their own choice, were at the same time so ready to hurry over those the

\* *Vie du P. Dupont*, par le P. Fr. Cachupin, ch. xxv., &c.

† P. Nouet in his *Homme d'Oraison*, t. i., tells us that he was surnamed the Apostle of Portugal.

‡ We read in his Life that finding himself one day whilst on a mission without his Breviary, through the fault of the brother who accompanied him, he did not hesitate to beg of God that he might immediately have another. His prayer was instantly heard. He recited his 'Hours' and then gave to his companion the Breviary he had just received in this miraculous manner, and recommended him more vigilance in future. Another incident still more wonderful was his preservation in the waters of the river Plate, in which he had been submerged whilst reciting the office of the Immaculate Conception.—*Life* by Seb. Bérétairé, and also his *Life* by Roderiguez, I. ii.

Church imposed upon them, and which they were obliged to say in Her name : \* likewise P. Aquaviva, fifth superior general of the Jesuits, author of an excellent commentary on the cxviii<sup>th</sup> psalm, and of a remarkable letter recommending to all the members of the Society a greater vigilance in celebrating worthily the Divine Office.† But we will only draw one more example from this source ; it is that of the pious and illustrious Bel-larmine, whose virtues caused him to be proposed for canonization (1542-1621).

He regarded the Breviary as the work of the Holy Ghost, and he offered to the Divine Majesty the sacrifice of his lips with the same devotion as he offered that of the altar. He never dispensed himself from reciting it even during attacks of most acute suffering. On one occasion when ill of fever and violent pain in the side, it was in vain that he was urged not to add this fatigue of the Office to the sufferings he felt ; he would not however omit a single verse. When on his deathbed he was almost constantly occupied with the Hours he had to recite. It required an express order of the physician to induce him to abstain from it. And if he thought himself bound to obey the advice, it was not without showing his regret and seeking compensation in the mental repetition of what memory could supply.‡

\* *De vita et Moribus P. L. Lessie, c. x., No. 48* : Paris, 1604. He calls the Breviary, *compendium admirabile*.—*De Jure et Just, t. ii., c. xxxvi., dub. 8.*

† *De divini officii recitatione*, Nov. 24, 1612.

‡ We read in the life of a holy priest of Avranches in the 17th century, M. Pierre Crestey, another example of affection for the Breviary not less edifying than the last cited. Once, when very ill, he asked the opinion of those around him if he ought to say his Hours. A young priest, zealous but not over discreet, hastened to reply : “ Try, I will help you ”. Immediately with child-like simplicity and most touching piety, M. Crestey began to accompany him



In the desire to conform more perfectly to the spirit of the Church, he had accustomed himself to recite each Hour at its proper time. He said Matins and Lauds during the night, or at least very early in the morning, adding thereto mental prayer in which he by preference meditated on the words of the psalms : Prime was said at sunrise ; Tierce after Mass ; Sext at midday ; None, some time after rising from table ; Vespers at sunset ; and Compline when the day was ended. The order which he observed in his occupations allowed him to reserve these moments for himself, and the veneration universally felt for him would have forbidden any one's interference with his liberty in this matter. A certain Cardinal having called upon him at a time when he was engaged in his Hours took no offence on seeing him follow it up to the end, and thought it perfectly right that before conversing with man he should finish his audience with Almighty God.

It was one of his practices to unite his praises to those of the angels ; and as he knew that they all, pure and holy as they are, approach not the Supreme Majesty but with the greatest reverence, he made it a rule never to address God but bare-headed and on his knees. Towards the end of his life he was obliged to relax somewhat this rule ; but, if he could not always kneel, he yet maintained the most respectful posture—standing motionless, and with eyes raised towards heaven.

by heart. Then, having finished, he said to him, " I am under a great obligation to you, sir ; you have almost cured me by procuring me the happiness of saying my Office which I could not have done without your aid".—*Vie de Messire P. Crestey* : Rouen, 1732.

On one occasion he was walking slowly and silently in the corridor of a monastery. A monk, who had been directed to confer with him upon some business, perceived him thus walking, as was his custom, as though absorbed in God. He stopped suddenly, "Come here, Father," said the Cardinal in the most gracious manner, and going forward to meet him, "what do you fear?" "To interrupt your Eminence," replied the religious; "I thought you were occupied with your Office." "What!" said the holy man with astonishment, "that I should thus recite the Divine Office, walking and with my head covered! God preserve me from ever paying to Him so little respect." \*

### § IX.

The virtue of this pious Cardinal shone the more over Rome on account of the consideration his talents had gained for him; so, likewise, was it in the examples offered, in a still more elevated rank, by S. Charles, Archbishop of Milan, nephew of Pope Paul IV. (1538-1584).

This saintly pastor was in the habit of never beginning the evening Office until after a quarter of an hour's mental prayer. When residing in his episcopal city he never failed to be present, on solemn occasions, at the Chapter Offices. Then he might be seen in such recollection, and so attentive, that he might be said to have been in ecstasy, and often when the choir master came to him to announce the antiphon he was to sing, it was necessary to warn him that he might be ready. On ordinary days, when he did not go to the Cathedral, he

\* *Vié*, par le P. Frizon, l. v. et vi.

recited his Hours with the clergy of his household ; for he thought, that in general, one's fervour and attention were better maintained when not alone ; and he laid much stress on the special assistance which Our Lord has promised to those who should be gathered together to ask anything in His Name.

He recommended his clergy to reanimate their fervour each time they said : *Deus in adjutorium meum intende* ; and never to pronounce, without a loving confidence, the words by which the different prayers end : *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum*. He also advised them to unite in spirit during the recitation with the saint whose Office they were celebrating, and to refer to him, in thought, each word that might seem to be applicable to him. Lastly, he inculcated this practice ; to have their Breviary ever before their eyes, and to recite nothing by heart, the better to guard against haste and routine and to enable them to relish the more all the words they pronounced. He was himself so exact in the observance of this rule that he would read from the Breviary even what he knew best, even the Pater Noster. He discharged this duty of fidelity to the Office to the end of his life. On the day he died he omitted for the first time a portion of it ; yet he desired that it should be recited before him, and he did his best to unite himself in mind and heart to that recitation.\*

## § X.

S. Philip Neri, founder of the Oratory, showed likewise at the same period (1515-1595) his zeal for the

\* *Life*, by Giussano, l. ii. c. iii., et l. viii. c. ii., lately edited by the Oblate Fathers of S. Charles.

Church and his love in his prayers for Her. Such was the devotion with which the singing of the Divine Office inspired him that he could not refrain from tears when listening to it ; and often, when in Rome he was found in some church after Matins or Compline prostrated, absorbed, and, as it were inebriated with heavenly consolations. When he said his Office alone he was often obliged to stop, ravished with the beauty of the sentiments that arose in his soul or transported with the ardour of his thoughts. He might then be seen, standing motionless, his face turned heavenward, and his eyes almost closed, although he advised, as did S. Charles, that it was not well to trust to memory, but rather to keep the Breviary in hand, especially during the recital of the Little Hours. To avoid these ecstatic scenes, and in order to be sure to be ready to finish in time, he sought opportunities to say the Office with others. Still, as he did not always succeed in avoiding these extraordinary favours, and as in the course of years he had contracted many grave infirmities, being nearly eighty years old, the Sovereign Pontiff sent him permission to replace the Office by the Rosary or some shorter prayer. But the holy priest could not bring himself to take advantage of this facility. Rather, when illness prevented his pronouncing any prayer, he asked his brethren to recite it aloud by his side so that his soul might lose none of its ordinary food ; and he followed every word, with such attention, that even at those moments when he seemed absorbed in God, or overcome by his pain, if they happened to make the slightest mistake, or pronounced a word wrongly, he checked them with a gesture to warn them of this failure. Many times he would still wish to

say it, even when thought to be at the point of death. He seemed, indeed, as though he recovered new strength from this holy exercise.\*

## § XI.

Whilst Rome and the other countries of Italy were edified by these examples, others were seen nearer home, and in France especially, not less worthy of admiration.

S. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) was too closely connected with all the holy priests of his time and was too much imbued with their spirit not to share their sentiments upon the subject of the Divine Office. From the time of his first studies, it was his happiness to recite it frequently, either with the priest who had been appointed his tutor or with the religious in whose houses he loved to pass his leisure hours on feast days. Accordingly, he did not regard as a burden the obligation he took to recite it on becoming sub-deacon. "After the Bible," he said, "I know no grander work than the Roman Breviary," and he could not refrain from expressing his surprise when he met with ecclesiastics who seemed to him to set but little value on it, or attached but little interest to the possession of a perfect acquaintance with it. He said of some one who knew nothing about the calendar and the order of the different feast-days that he was a stranger *to the science of the saints*.† Great as were the sweetness of his soul and the holy liberty of his conduct he did not fail to bind himself in saying the Office to the observance of the rules of the deepest piety. He

\* *Vita de S. Filippo Neri*, dal P. J. Bacchi, t. ii. c. iv., v., x.

† *S. Francois de Sales, modele et guide du prêtre et du pasteur*, l. i., 12°, 1861.

made it a rule to say it only kneeling or standing, and never relaxed this resolution however he might be overpowered by fatigue or infirmity. Whenever he could he went to the church to say it, and even when at Annecy he never neglected choir but for some real impediment. A religious who knew him well says, "He appeared in his stall as a statue, without motion, without haste, without looking here or there, and without caring for anything but to pray well, peacefully advancing from verse to verse, tasting and enjoying at his ease the honey of heavenly sweetness which the Holy Ghost then distilled for him".\* "Often," said he to one of his friends, "I am so pressed with business that I know not where to turn or at which end to begin; yet, in saying the Office, this does not trouble me in the least; it does not even cause me any distraction. I imagine myself to be in Heaven, and that I am singing the praises of my Creator in the company of angels; then, on leaving the choir, I often find that this heavy business that gave me so much trouble is finished off in an instant." †

At his death it was remarked that one of his Breviaries that remained in a Convent of the Visitation which he had recently founded in Burgundy, opened of its own accord and began to fill the house with the sweetest odour. This miracle was looked upon as a divine testimony to his piety and as an earnest that he had begun in Heaven, never more to cease, the Office of blessing and praise which he had sung here below with so angelic a fervour. ‡

\* *Vie*, par le P. de la Reviere, p. 117.

† *Vie*, par M. le Curé de S. Sulpice, t. ii.

‡ *Histoire de Sainte Chantal*, par M. Bougrand, t. ii. c. xxvi. Cf. S. Greg. the Great, *Dialog.*, t. iv. c. xxi.; and S. Greg. Turon de *Gloria Confess.*, c. xlvii.



## CHAPTER II.

### EXAMPLES GATHERED FROM THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF FRANCE DURING THE LAST THREE CENTURIES.

#### § I.

IT was the Institution of the Oratory which seemed at first destined to reanimate in France the love of the Divine Office, by honouring and propagating among the clergy the devotion of the Son of God toward his Father.\* There can be nothing better or more devout than the letter or rather the *opusculum* in which Cardinal de Bérulle, expounding to the Carmelites his views upon the Divine Office, points out to them the sentiments with which they ought to recite. We recognise in these words the sublimity of thought and profound piety that mark the character of this great mind.

“Think,” said he, “that you have to praise God for a multitude of creatures who are either unworthy or incapable of praising Him. Some are dumb without voice

\* It was during the Divine Office and whilst reciting these words, *Psallite Domino qui habitat in Sion* (Ps. ix.), that M. de Berulle received from above the first idea of his congregation (*Vie*, par Hubert, t. ii. c. 1). The name, *Oratory of Jesus*, which he gave to it, was intended to continually recall to its members that one of their principal objects was to honour and imitate the prayers of the Saviour for the Church. “Ut Jesum Christum pro nobis in oratione positum et pernoctantem venerentur et hanc precipuam Officii partem quæ in orationibus pro populo ac in laudibus Dei celebrandis versatur habeant.”—Magn. Bullar, 1613, t. iii. p. 371, *Sacro sanctæ*.

and without soul ; they must borrow therefore your spirit and your lips to praise their Creator. Others are, as it were, in a state of infancy, or they have recourse to your pre-eminence in grace in order to render through you their homage to their Sovereign Lord. A certain number, deprived through their own fault of the grace that had been offered to them are accursed of God and unworthy to praise Him. A double and a triple benediction is conferred then, upon you to praise God for them and for yourself. With this thought look upon yourself as delegated by every creature to praise their common Lord, and pay Him their common debt. Cannot you perceive that during this action the sun or moon lending you its light invites you to add to its mute homage that understanding and feelings which itself lacks. You praise then the Lord for all, for heaven and for earth, for creatures both animate and inanimate, for Christians and heathens, for Catholics and heretics, for the elect and reprobate, for hell, even though it protests and shudders in its perverse will. For you are placed between Heaven and Hell. Hell is beneath your feet, and would that you had as much fervour in praising the Divine Majesty, as it has perverseness in blaspheming Him ! Heaven is opened over your head, and would to God that you had as much elevation of mind and movement of piety as Heaven has repose, glory, and joy in the possession of its Lord !

“Think again that you perform this Office in union with our Divine Saviour. God the Father willed His Son to be Incarnate, and the Son willed to take flesh in order to be in a condition to praise and serve God His Father, in that most perfect manner of which neither

man, angels, nor any other creature in grace or in glory was capable. For, before this mystery there were only men and angels, that is to say, creatures to serve and praise God ; but now there is a Man-God, there is a God adoring, and a God adored ! and you can praise God only through the help of this Divine Worshipper, and in the spirit of this Man-God, and only by the strength and grace that come to you from this Source.

“ Think well then of this, and think of it often ; for this thought is a fundamental one in the Christian and perfect life. Before the face of God you would be but mere nothing unless you were members of His Son, incorporated with Our Lord by His grace, quickened in Him by His spirit, and making but one with Him in the sacred unity He has with His Father. Without Him then and without the graces you receive from Him, you are nothing, you can do nothing, and would be unworthy, but for Him, to offer up the sacrifice of praise. This is the truth that you profess when beginning your Office you say : *Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.*”\*

## § II.

Father de Condren (1588-1641), who had, according to Cardinal de Bérulle, received the Spirit of the Oratory from his very cradle, held upon the subject of prayer and the Divine Office the sentiments of its founder.† Of this there are many proofs both in his life and in his writings ; but the most striking of all is found in the teaching and practice of M. Olier (1608-1657), the one of

\* *Lettre aux religieuses de l'ordre du Notre Dame du Mont Carmel*, 32°.

† *Vie*, par le P. Amelotte, l. i. c. xvii.

his disciples whom he had pronounced to be the inheritor of his spirit, and who was destined to communicate it to the clergy by the most efficacious and lasting method.

Though he has not composed any special treatise upon Public Prayer, the pious institutor of seminaries strongly testifies in many places of his writings to the esteem in which he held it. It can be said that no one has understood better the excellence of the Office, the dispositions it requires, and the fruits which it ought to produce. We will endeavour to give an outline of his teaching in this matter, collecting together his chief thoughts and reproducing as much as possible his own expressions. He says :—

“The great obligation of priests is to adore, bless, and glorify the Divine Majesty for all men, in union with and in dependence on Our Lord, Model and Source of all true religion.”\*

“Just as in the Church of the Devil, God is blasphemed without ceasing, so likewise in the Church of Jesus Christ praise is ever offered to God. And since the Church of Satan formed by Babylon has spread itself with his blasphemies through the whole earth, it is necessary that Jerusalem, that the supper-room of the Apostles should fill the whole world with the praises of God.”†

But how amid so many cares and occupations can the faithful continuously praise the Lord? And how can men pay to their Creator a homage worthy of His Majesty? Divine Wisdom has provided the means in making the priest at one and the same time the mouthpiece of the Man-God and the interpreter of the Church.

\* *Saints Ordres*, p. III, c. vi.

† *Mémoires*, t. ii. p. 18.

Jesus Christ, in His capacity as Head, renders to His Father that which His members could not of themselves accomplish. As in each man the head speaks, sees and thinks for the whole body and thus supplies for the weakness of a heavy and gross mass, so does Jesus Christ supply for the defects of the body of the faithful—the bulk of Christians, who of themselves are blind, insensible and dumb. He lays before God the wants of the entire body. He speaks for the body, sees for the body, hears for the body,—in a word, as its Head, He does everything for it.

“This is what Jesus Christ does invisibly in heaven. This is what His ministers are called to do in a visible manner here below, or rather what Our Lord unceasingly does through them on earth. To this end He places in their hands the Divine Office, the expression of His sentiments, and of the duty of His members towards the Father: and whilst as Head and Priest He communicates to them His Spirit to enable them to perform it, He causes the Church to put them under the obligation of observing it in His Name. Thus the priest, the representative of Our Lord, is at the same time the living symbol of the unity of His members. The Church, comprised in Him, addresses Herself by Him to the Eternal Father, and by virtue of His spirit, Jesus Christ quickening on the lips of His ministers the praises of the Church, renders these praises worthy of God, just as He consecrates by their hands His Body and Blood to make of them a victim worthy of infinite Majesty.”\* A doctrine like this supposes between Jesus Christ and His

\* *Saints ordres, p. III, c. vi., et Mysteris de N. S. appliqués aux divers actes de la journée.*

ministers the closest union ; it implies a certain unity of spirit of life, and of supernatural action.—*Unum corpus et unus spiritus*.\* It is this mysterious fact that M. Olier strives above everything to establish, and we should find some difficulty in obtaining elsewhere so striking an exposition of it. He says :—

“ We must regard all Christians as but a single subject, inasmuch one single Christ, on account of the same Divine Word that resides in all, and Who operates in all, at the same time enlightens, warms, and unites all. For the Holy Ghost does not only walk before us as the column of fire in the desert. He is in us, in the midst of us, the children of God or *the true Israel of God* being moved, directed, and interiorly conducted by the Spirit of God. He is the universal life of the Church as She herself proclaims.—*Cujus spiritu totum Corpus Ecclesiæ sanctificatur et regitur*.”†

“ All Christians are one Christ, as in the Trinity the Three Persons are One God. The plurality and distinction of the Divine Persons do not prevent the Unity and Identity of Essence, so neither does the multiplicity of the members of Jesus Christ hinder the unity of spirit, of sentiment, and of the supernatural life between them : *In illo die vos cognoscetis quia Ego sum in Patre Meo, et vos in Me, et Ego in vobis. Sicut Tu Pater in Me et Ego in Te, et ipsi in Nobis unum sunt*.”‡

“ One of the most striking images of the Church is found in the three children in the Babylonian furnace. All three, surrounded by flames externally and inflamed

\* *Ephes. iv. 4.*

† *Mémoires, ii. 356, and Explicat. du Pater.*

‡ *John xiv. 20, xvii. 21. Mémoires, i. 481.*



interiorly with the fire of the Holy Ghost, praised and blessed God as though they had but one mouth, because they had but one and the same spirit, or rather because the Divine Word to Whose body they belonged and Who became visible in their midst, glorified God by their voice, and returned thanks to Him for this world which He has created : *Hi tres quasi uno ore laudabunt et glorificabunt Deum.*\* He then began what He continues to do in the society of the faithful. Finding Himself indebted, according to His human nature, to His Father for the benefit of Creation, He is not content with thanking Him in His own Person, but gathers together in His Church a multitude of creatures to thank Him in His name. And all of them repeat after Him this canticle which He intoned by the lips of His prophet : *Benedicite omnia opera Domini, Domino.* Works that are Mine and of which I am the Lord, praise with Me, Him Who is My Lord and yours ! . . . And to the end that His praise may not cease, He wills that this Church shall subsist in the ages to come. Likewise, that all His members may take part in His thanksgiving, He makes them partake of all His riches. He imparts to them the use of this world created for Him. And that they may the better share His intentions, He causes His designs to be written down beforehand, and directs them to be repeated from age to age by thousands of voices. So that it is always the same Christ Who praises God : *Christus heri et hodie, Ipse et in sæcula* ; the Christ Who has been, Who is, and Who will be ; Who was in the ancient people before He was born, Who now subsists in His Human Nature, and will be for

\* *Dan. iii. 51.*

ever in the hearts of those who shall believe in Him. Thus the Son of God has a thousand hearts for one heart, and a thousand mouths for one mouth ; or rather, all these hearts and all these mouths, animated by His zeal and inflamed with His love, are only the instruments of His Spirit poured out on them to multiply His praises, and to offer to the glory of the Father an immense and perpetual concert.”\* It is upon this principle of the unity of the mystical Body of Our Lord and of the sameness of His spirit in all His Members, that M. Olier founds the idea which he conceives of the psalms. In his opinion, David is the living image of Jesus Christ ; an anticipated copy of the Divine Original ; and as the Spirit is given to us nowadays to reproduce in us the sentiments of this Divine Head ; in the same manner, and more abundantly still this Spirit had been given beforehand to the Psalmist in order that he might have the foreknowledge of his dispositions and might thus announce them to the world.

To penetrate him more deeply with this idea, God gave to His servant great lights and favoured him with great graces.

“On Ascension Day, 1642, David was shown to me in spirit, and this sight convinced me that no one had received such lights upon the destiny of Our Lord as he, nor had participated so abundantly as he in the dispositions of the Man-God. Already, I had remarked in reading the gospel, that Our Lord specified the psalms in particular as filled with predictions concerning Him : *In psalmis de me*.† Already, even on the preceding Ro-

\* *Mémoires*, I. 436, 417. Cf. S. Aug. *de Utilit. et cantu psalm.*

† *Luc. xxiv. 44. Mémoires*, t. ii. p. 44.

gation Wednesday, it had been given to me to see in the Psalmist the interior affections of Jesus Christ. From that date I had received the understanding of the Psalms, particularly of those that referred to the Passion and Resurrection ; and my director to whom God had given knowledge of this favour had cautioned me to put it to profit by reading and meditating upon the psalter.\* I see it clearly to-day. It was by a just claim that Our Lord said to His Father : *Domine probasti me et cognovisti me : tu cognovisti sessionem meam et resurrectionem meam* ; for we must understand this psalm of Him, not of David who has not risen from the tomb.—*Intellexisti cogitationes meas de longi* : Thou hast foreseen my thoughts from afar. Not only hast Thou foreseen them, but Thou hast announced them beforehand, and made them manifest in him who prefigured Me before Thy people : *Semitam meam et funiculum meum investigasti*. Thou hast traced as by a string-course the path of my life : *Omnes vias meas prævidisti ; quia non est sermo in lingua mea*. Thou hast fixed all My thoughts in My soul and hast prescribed even the least of My movements, so that I have not uttered a word but what Thou hast marked out to Me.—*Ecce Domine tu cognovisti omnia, novissima et antiqua ; tu formasti me et posuisti super me manum tuam* : When Thou didst form Me with Thy Divine Hand, Thou hast considered the beginning and end of all things, that every thing might accord with Me ; like the architect who adjusts to the key-stone all the stones of the arch, making them suitable to and fit for its supports.† Therein is the great mystery of Thy Divine

\* *Mémoires*, I. 423, 424, 438, 439, and 442.

† *Mémoires*, I. 435.

wisdom: *Mysterium a sæculis absconditum*.\* Hidden in the bosom of the Godhead He awaited the moment to bud forth; and at length He showed Himself, as it had been said in the midst of the ages: *In medio annorum vivifica illud*.† We see by this example how M. Olier understood the Psalms and at what point of view he placed himself when reciting them.‡ The author of his Life remarks that, before beginning the Office, he never failed to recollect himself and remain some time in silence. This was that he might invoke Our Lord's spirit that he might enter into the intentions of which this spirit is the principle, and which Our Lord desires to impart to His ministers. M. Olier has himself expressed in his *Journée Chretienne* the sentiments with which he thought we should address our God in the Divine Office. He says:—

“My God! I adore Thy Spirit poured out upon Thy prophets, the writers of the Psalms and Canticles. The purity of their lives, the sublimity of their thoughts and sentiments confound and annihilate me. The transports of their hearts, their holy dispositions, and the diversity of movements which they express cannot be understood by an earthly soul like mine. But I adhere whilst I understand not to the Spirit that has produced them.

“Spirit of God! Who makest it Thy delight to continue in the Church that which Thou didst begin in these holy men, I offer Thee my soul in order that Thou mayest work therein Thy Will. Declare to it what

\* *Col. i. 26.* † *Habac. iii. 2; Mémoires, I. 435.*

‡ M. Olier has paraphrased in his *Mémoires* many passages of the Breviary, particularly many of the Psalms both in the literal and liturgical sense. See *Psalms* 16, 20, 54, 57, 110, 168, etc., t. iii. p. 108, 168, 386, 455, 500, etc.

Thou hast declared to them—extend in me and in all the Church the services thou renderest to God in the Heart of Jesus, the Head and Life of all the prophets.

“My God! Who takest Thy whole delight in Our Lord because He alone pays Thee, by virtue of Thy Spirit Whose fulness is His, all the honour and praise that prophets and patriarchs, that apostles and their disciples, that the angels of heaven and the saints on earth have ever rendered to Thee; deign to associate my soul and Thy whole Church to the sentiments and homage by which He honours Thee so perfectly in heaven. Confounded in myself as a miserable sinner, I adore this Divine Son, the only, true and perfect Worshipper of Thy Name, and I unite myself to Thy Spirit by the purest powers of my soul in order to glorify Thee in Him.”

There is nothing, according to M. Olier, more important than to penetrate ourselves with these thoughts and to consider ourselves in the Office as being the simple mouthpieces of Jesus Christ which He deigns to use in order to continue upon earth the praises which He came from heaven to offer to the Father. To render this idea more clear, M. Olier caused, from a design by Lebrun, a seal to be engraved, which has often been reproduced and is well known in seminaries.\* Certainly it would be diffi-

\* We see on it in the upper part in heaven, says M. de Bretonvilliers his successor at Saint Sulpice, the Holy Ghost, the Source of all homage and of every blessing of which God is the Object here below. Beneath, but in the air and upon the clouds, appears David with his heart enlightened by this spirit and as it were transported with love. In him we recognise the face of Jesus Christ, the True Praise of the Father upon Whom the Spirit reposes with all fulness, and Whose every intention tends to glorify the Divine Majesty. The harp he holds in his hands, and on which may be read the words: *Magnificate Dominum mecum*, represents the soul of Our Lord, Who in a continuous movement of



cult to find more exalted views or purer sentiments. Accordingly, we cannot be surprised to hear that M. Olier told his director that God had encouraged him and confirmed him in his holy practices by granting him extraordinary favours. He says :—

“I remember one year during the Octave of the Ascension as I was going to begin the Office, that it pleased God to permit me to enter into a participation of this great mystery. I felt all of a sudden our Saviour, Who giving as it were a kiss to my soul, seemed by a pouring out of Himself to take a fresh possession thereof, and to make me understand that He wished to be entirely mine. As He thus held Himself stretched over me, I by degrees felt myself detached from everything, and able to fly off with Him to heaven. I was as it were in an ecstasy, unable to enjoy or suffer anything connected with this

love towards God, would desire that every accent of His should be repeated by all hearts.

Around David, a little lower down, priests are seen in surplice, kneeling, their eyes raised to heaven, also holding harps upon which is inscribed the remainder of the verse : *Exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum*. These are the ministers of the Church who are charged to bless God for all their brethren, and consequently obliged to unite themselves to the Spirit of Our Lord and to associate themselves with His praises. They wear surplices to mark the purity which their function requires. They are kneeling in an attitude of adoration to express the sentiments in which they ought to live. They look up to heaven, and we read on their harps : *In idipsum*, because their only thought should be to praise God in and through Jesus Christ His beloved Son ; that it is in Him, with Him, and through Him solely that they should aspire to glorify the Divine Majesty. Lastly, at the lower part of the seal, these words of the Apocalypse : *Audivi vocem de cælo, tanquam vocem aquarum multarum, sicut citharædorum citharizantium in citharis suis* (xiv. 2). It is said *the voice* not *voices*, because, however numerous the ministers of the Church may be, it is nevertheless only one voice, one only homage to which God attends : that of Our Saviour, our Divine Head. He only has the right to intone the Canticle of Sion and cause His children to sing it.—*Esprit de M. Olier*.



present existence, seeing only God and sighing for Him alone.\*

"Some time before this, whilst I was saying my Office, God deigning to show me how great was the care He took of me, allowed me to see His hands as it were stretched over my head, in the same manner that bishops place them on the heads of priests at ordination, or rather as the High Priests of the Old Law placed their hand upon the victims to take possession of them in the name of the Lord and to consecrate them to Him. It seemed to me that He thus took possession of me, consecrating me to His service and rendering me absolutely all His own."† These first favours were only for his own benefit; there were others that extended to the members of his community and which must have increased his zeal for their instruction and sanctification.

"To-day, the Vigil of the Assumption of Our Lady, I felt myself filled with the Holy Ghost during vespers. He raised my heart to God and inspired, as I thought, my prayers. At the same time I saw this same Spirit poured out into the hearts of the young ecclesiastics who were present and acting upon them. He offered at once their prayers to God and held their hearts raised towards Him in unity: *in idipsum* in such a manner that we were all together but One in Him.‡

"I remember, furthermore, another view that God gave me on the union of our prayers in the Office with the pleasure His heart takes therein. It was on a Thursday in July, 1642. Returning from a walk, my young men

\* Cf. *Memoires*, t. v. 243; ii. 1, 4.

† *Memoires*, i. 95, 264; iii. 271; iv. 357. ‡ *Memoires*, v. 127.

and myself were saying together the Office of the Translation of S. Benedict. I had prepared them for it by some holy intention. Whilst we were praying, I saw in spirit the whole Court of Heaven contemplating us as if in expectation of what we were going to do. At the same moment a great servant of God, who followed us, came to me to say that he had just had this same vision. He told it to me without my having spoken to him of mine. After having stated that he had seen Heaven opened and the saints and angels watching us, he added that the Most Blessed Trinity manifested Itself to him contemplating all the assembly with pleasure. He further told me that he had seen Jesus Christ come down from Heaven upon us, then enter into each one of us to dwell there, never to leave us again.\*

“And in fact I feel that this Divine Master is in me to render to His Father the homage I owe Him. Sometimes my heart expands in praises and seems to me as though spread out and multiplied through the whole world. At other times, I feel as if it would honour God in every way He desires to be honoured. These sentiments are those of Jesus, my Love. Oh! if I had as many hearts and tongues as there are unhappy spirits who blaspheme Him, how willingly would I employ all my powers to sing His praises and glorify Him in their stead! At least, let me raise up to Him and offer Him a thousand and a thousand souls who may consume their lives for Him and for the Church, His most dear Spouse.”†

\* *Memoires*, ii. 314.

† *Esprit*. 96, 313.

## § III.

Originally a member of the Oratory, Father Eudes had drawn the spirit of religion from the same source as M. Olier. Accordingly he was equally with him a model of love for the Divine Office and of zeal in reciting it well.

According to the relation of F. de Hérambourg he never began it until he had recalled to mind this maxim—*Sancta sancte, et divina digne Deo*; thus he became filled with the dignity of this work. Then he remained silent for the space of three Ave Marias to prepare his soul and make his intention.

For this preparation he had various methods which he followed by turns according to his disposition.

Sometimes entering into himself he would humble himself for his own nothingness and for his sins. He would acknowledge with Abraham that he was but dust and ashes; with David that his sin rendered him unworthy to be heard; with S. Peter that he was unable by himself to correspond to his vocation. Then he would purify his heart by acts of contrition, and he cast away from his mind every thought capable of distracting him.

At other times he laid before himself the motives which he had for praising God—His infinite greatness, the eminence of His perfections, the extent of His mercies, the wonders of His power. In the next place, recalling his vocation, he said to himself: It is my duty to bless the Lord in the name of all my brethren, for the priest represents the Christian people in the same manner as the high priest of the Jews represented the

twelve tribes ; he is their guardian and ought to be their spokesman.

Another of his practices was to prostrate himself in spirit before the throne of God, of that God in Whose presence the angels tremble and the human soul of Jesus Christ is penetrated with awe. This thought so regulated his senses, both exterior and interior, that it was enough to look at him to know with what his mind was occupied. A more profound sense of religion could not be imagined. His position of body was modest and grave ; it might be said he was like an angel in the flesh : his mouth was, like that of the prophet, *filled with the praises of his Maker*. Nevertheless, knowing that the heavens perfect as they might be, are not pure in the sight of God, and annihilate themselves at the feet of Jesus Christ, he offered himself to Our Lord and he besought Him to fill him with His Spirit during this holy act.

We come now to the last and most favourite of his methods. Persuaded that nothing can be pleasing to God if not offered to Him by His Son, convinced that in order to be heard by the Father it is necessary to be covered with the garments, that is with the dispositions of Jesus, our elder brother ; F. Eudes made it his study to unite himself to the sentiments with which the Incarnate Word incessantly praises the Blessed Trinity, whether it be in heaven where He rejoices with His saints, or in the Eucharist where He gives Himself to our souls to make them partakers in His adoration, or lastly, in the whole world which He fills *with the glory and majesty of the Most High*.

The ever Blessed Trinity was the object of his most

profound adoration. Never did he pronounce Its name, never did he hear It pronounced without uncovering his head and lowly bowing it. Yet his most ordinary attraction was that which drew him towards the Incarnate Word ; for it was Jesus Christ, the God-Man, Whom he honoured in the holy Office as in all his other exercises of piety.

He made for himself a sketch of the different parts of the life of our Saviour, and to them he referred the various portions of the Divine Office. In the three Nocturns of Matins, he said the first in honour of the eternal life of the Word in the bosom of the Father, the second in honour of His mystic life in the patriarchs and just of the Old Law, the third in honour of His hidden life in the womb of the Blessed Virgin during the nine months preceding His birth. At Lauds he honoured His childhood, at Prime his obscure and laborious life, at Tierce His public life and ministry. Sext was said in honour of the Passion, Death, and Burial ; None in memory of the Resurrection, Ascension, and Eternal Triumph in heaven. Vespers had for its object the condition in which our Saviour continues to dwell for us upon earth, either in the Eucharist or in the Church ; and Compline, the Empire He has obtained over the whole world, and which He will continue to exercise for ever. During each of these hours F. Eudes considered the portion of the life of Jesus that he was to honour. He endeavoured to discover therein what were the sentiments, the virtues, and designs of Our Lord. He meditated upon His dispositions and His thoughts. Turning then inwardly to himself, he felt confounded to find himself so unlike this perfect Model ;

he begged pardon for his faults ; he resigned himself to God's designs in his regard ; he besought Him to destroy everything that might prove an obstacle to them ; lastly, he desired to be entirely changed into praises and into blessings that he might contribute thereby to His glory.

Besides this, F. Eudes had many other ways of devoting himself to God in the recitation of the Office, and the great use he made of them made him very skilful in the employment of them. In order to communicate to his brethren the fruits of his experience he composed in his later life a work upon this subject. It is to be regretted that this book has not come down to us.

One of the counsels which he most frequently gave either to the members of his society or to parish priests was that they should avoid all exterior irreverence and all precipitation in public prayer. "I conjure you above all things," he writes to a superior, "that the exercises which relate immediately to God, as the Holy Sacrifice and the Divine Office, should be performed in a grave and devout manner, never with haste and carelessness." When he saw the Divine Office celebrated without respect and in a hurry, he could not restrain his zeal. One day, having entered a church to adore the Blessed Sacrament, he was scandalized at the haste with which the Office of the Dead was being there recited. Hearing the chorister intone as fast as possible the beautiful canticle of Lauds,—*Ego dixi : In dimidio dierum meorum, vadam ad portas inferi*,—"Ah !" said he as he left the church, loud enough to be heard by his companion, "if you continue at this speed you will soon get there."\*

\* *Le R. P. J. Eudes, ses vertus*, par le P. de Hérabourg.



## § IV.

After F. Eudes, that fervent apostle of the hearts of Jesus and Mary, it is but just to mention here the humble and pious founder of the "Christian Schools," one of the disciples of M. Tronson, at the seminary of S. Sulpice.

The venerable Jean Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719) always recited the Divine Office with a respect and recollection that filled all who witnessed it with admiration. Always bareheaded, however cold the weather, and frequently on his knees, he was so absorbed by the beauties that unfolded themselves to his soul that nothing could distract him, whilst sometimes he was even found as if in an ecstasy.

On one occasion whilst travelling with a brother religious he desired to say his 'Hours' on the way. In order not to be disturbed by his companion, he told him to go on before him. The brother continued his journey for some time, but after a while on looking back and not seeing any one behind him, he stopped to wait for his superior. Then as he did not come, being annoyed and disquieted, the brother turned back seeking the cause of the delay. He was not long in discovering it. Absorbed in his Office the good priest had stopped on the road ; he was in the attitude of a man in prayer, the eyes turned heavenward as if ravished in ecstasy, so that it was necessary to pull him by his cassock and even shake him to recall him to himself. His first movement was to evince his distress at being discovered and disturbed at such a moment. "Why," said he to the

brother, "did you return? Did I not tell you to go on before me?"

At another time he was at the noviciate of Saint Yon. All of a sudden whilst saying his Office in the infirmary, a fire broke out in a part of the building with such violence that it was feared the noviciate would soon be reduced to ashes. The novices who were reciting the Little Office together stopped, and then ran to arrest the progress of the flames. As for the pious founder, he appeared neither to see nor hear anything. He continued quietly praying without appearing moved and without changing his place. It was not until he had finished his Office as usual that he went to see what was the matter. It is to be supposed that it was to his prayers that the preservation of the house was to be attributed. For it is certain that no sooner had he perceived the danger and had returned to pray than the fire slackened, and before long entirely ceased, without having caused any great damage.\*

## § V.

If we have not cited S. Vincent de Paul (1576-1660) at the beginning of this chapter, as his holiness would seem to have required, it is because upon the subject which we are treating his biographers have related nothing of his discourses, and speak but little of his examples. We are not ignorant, however, that he carefully watched over the profoundly pious performance of the Divine Office in his house. He often recommended his brethren "to recite it with attention and devotion," pronouncing every word slowly and

\* *Vie du Ven. Jean Baptist de La Salle*, p. iv. ch. i. art. 3; et ch. iii. art. 1.

lovingly, keeping the eyes downwards or fixed on the Breviary, without looking to the right or left. And upon this point, as upon all others, he might be taken as a model. When he could go to choir to sing the psalms he remained with so much recollection of mind that he seemed absorbed in God. When saying his 'Hours' alone it was always in the humblest posture—bareheaded and kneeling on the ground. He could then say, as did the Psalmist : *Oratio mea in sinu meo convertetur*. If during the last years of his life, he allowed himself to say it seated it was because his infirmities rendered any other posture impossible. But nothing could prevail upon him to dispense with the Breviary as he was advised. When Alexander VII., informed of his state, desired him to be told that he was released from the duty of saying it, it was without the knowledge and against the desire of the servant of God. He died in fact before the arrival of the dispensation. For want of more detailed documents in the history of S. Vincent de Paul we will here relate the edifying examples which we find in the life of one of his worthy children, the venerable Perboire, who had the glory of shedding his blood for the Gospel during the recent persecutions in the Chinese Empire.

The memorials he left in the seminary, where he was at first a professor, or in the noviciate of the congregation, wherein he afterwards discharged the duty of sub-director, attest that he had realised, in the highest degree, the due esteem and knowledge of the Divine Office, and that he neglected no means to acquit himself worthily in the recital of it. One of his companions observes :—

“ He always recited with great attention the preparatory prayer : *Aperi, Domine* . . . laying special stress upon these words : *In unione*, etc. . . . on account of the strong desire he had to praise the Lord with the same intention and like ardour as Jesus Christ had on earth. When he said these other words : *Deus in adiutorium*, etc., it was with a deep conviction of the need he had of Divine help, and with ardent aspirations to draw down the graces of heaven. If he did not feel himself sufficiently penetrated with the sentiment expressed by these words he repeated them, and dwelt upon this invocation until his mind and heart were disposed according to his wish to celebrate the praises of God.

“ When alone, he often went to recite the Office upon his knees before the Blessed Sacrament. If he were with others he took care before he began to say a few words upon any passage in the psalms that occurred to him ; and his reflexions when explaining in the Scriptures passages which had not been noticed before, suggested to his hearers a desire for greater attention during the recitation. Sometimes he would preface the Office with the reading of some verses of the New Testament or of the Imitation of Christ ; saying, ‘ Let us refresh our souls a bit ’. At other times he added : ‘ The psalms were inspired by the spirit of Love ; we ought to recite them with the ardour of Charity,’ or again : ‘ Let us say the Breviary to-day in such a manner that we shall not have cause to blush before the Saint whose virtues we are about to honour ’.

“ An extreme attention was also noticed in him whenever he repeated the *Gloria* at the end of the psalms. He then bowed his head with great respect and his devo-

tion seemed to redouble. 'We ought to recollect ourselves,' he said, 'during the Doxology, in order to arouse our fervour and make up for the distractions we allowed ourselves to have during the psalm we have just finished, and to dispose ourselves to recite better the one that follows.' He had besides so great a desire to honour the ever Blessed Trinity, that it often happened that he repeated this prayer four or five times in succession.

"Often one could see him being seized as it were by a sudden thought or by the contemplation of some truth. He would remain motionless and his eyes would be fixed on the heavens. At such times he no longer saw anything around him, his soul was wholly absorbed in God. After having waited a few moments his neighbours would rouse him from this condition. He would blush, excuse himself, and then add, 'Where are we now?' and then he would continue with the same fervour as before. This would happen five or six times during each Hour, sometimes oftener, sometimes less frequently. The passages that produced most frequently this effect upon him were those where the Psalmist speaks of the Divine Perfections.

"On solemn days when still more absorbed in God, and less master of himself, he preferred to be alone and tried to withdraw himself from the search made after him by his brethren; and when his Office was over, they would find him all on fire with most holy ardour.—'Oh!' said he one day, to some young ecclesiastics who were out walking with him and who hoped to edify themselves with his conversation, 'what graces may we not draw from the Divine Office when we recite it properly!

It is the school of every virtue. The Master to whom we listen is the Holy Ghost Who teaches all truth ; here we have the prophets, the apostles, the saints His own mouthpieces. Why do we profit so little by such lessons! . . . What an account shall we have to give for so great a grace! . . . I have often thought we might apply to the Breviary the word of the venerable Simeon on Our Lord: *Ecce positus hic in ruinam et in resurrectionem multorum in Israel!*' '\* . . .

\* *Luc. ii. 34. Vie du ven. Perboire prêtre de la Mission, martyriné en Chine le 2 Jansier, 1840, t. iii. c. ii., etc.*



## SECOND PART.

### ON THE DIVINE OFFICE IN ITS PRINCIPAL PARTS.

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#### THE FIRST TREATISE.

##### *On the Division of the Divine Office.*

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### GENERAL DIVISIONS OF THE DIVINE OFFICE.

THERE is in the Office a fixed portion which is as it were its foundation, and which is repeated daily ; and there is also a variable part which is modified according to the different times, so as to be adapted to the mysteries honoured or to the saints whose feasts are celebrated. As the study of the first only enters into the plan of this work, we shall touch but briefly upon the second. We shall therefore limit ourselves to giving an idea of it and to saying afterwards a few words upon its modifications.

#### § I.

The Divine Office like the Liturgy has for its object the glory of God or of the Three Divine Persons. But it

is not the Holy Trinity regarded in Itself, in the unity of Its Nature, or in the distinction of Its Persons that ought to form habitually the direct Object of our worship on earth. We are not pure spirits like the angels. God does not unveil His adorable Essence to us as He does to the blessed in Heaven. When that day comes and it is given us to contemplate the Uncreated Light in Its own clearness, our eyes will for ever fix upon It their gaze and wondering adoration. But now it is only in the Man-God, that we can contemplate and bless Its divine perfections.\* Thus the Word made flesh terminates and resumes in His Own Person all religion here below. He is its principal object and first source, in such wise that it is not only with Him and by Him, but it is moreover in Him and in His Person as the term, that all honour and glory should be given by us to the adorable and undivided Trinity : *Ut glorificetur Pater in Filio.*† *Per Ipsum, cum Ipso et in Ipso.*‡

This is why there is in the calendar of the Church but one festival consecrated to the Trinity,§ whilst all the

\* Jesus Christ, as it were, hides Himself to honour His Father : on the other hand God has placed Himself in the shade as though He would receive no worship but through His Son. This is what our Saviour meant when He said that He sought not His own glory—*Est qui quærat*. He adds : " It is for My Father to apportion the honour which He chooses I should receive ; and one day the world will be judged according as it shall have given Me glory or contempt."—Olier, *Attributs divins*, ix. ; cf. Thomasius, *Cur non sit festum Patri dicatum* ; and Frenicle, *Explication des cérémonies et offices de l'Eglise*, p. 1, sect. 1, ch. 1 et 11.

† *Joan xiv. 13.*

‡ " Per Christum ad Christum venis ; per Christum hominum ad Christum Deum ; per Verbum carnem factum ad Verbum quod erat in principio Deus apud Deum."—S. Aug., *Tr. xiii. in Joan.*

§ It is however right to remark that every Sunday, that is to say the seventh part of the days of the year, are directly consecrated to the worship of

others are devoted to honour Jesus Christ in His Own Person and in His members. This too is the reason why the Divine Office is unceasingly occupied in reproducing and glorifying some scene in the life of the Man-God. Lastly, this is why the history of the Saviour is set forth and recurs in it at regular intervals so that we are constantly following the thread of it, and thus the year's course is identified for us with that of His mysteries.\*

## § II.

In truth we may refer the whole of the earthly life of our Saviour to four principal facts. His birth, death upon the Cross, resurrection, and triumph in heaven and in the Church. Further, these four facts form the division of the Office and characterize its different parts. Placed at a convenient distance from each other, and surrounded by secondary occurrences which are referable to them, they succeed each other with sufficient interval to enable us to become penetrated with each of them, to meditate

God without any special reference to the Second Person. Of these Sundays, four in Advent and nine from Septuagesima to Easter are privileged, and are thus placed in the rank of first or second class.

\* "*Ecclesia in toto anni curriculo repræsentare studet Christi actiones a primo adventu in carne usque ad secundum in fine mundi adventum.*"—Gavant, *Thesaurus Sacrarum Rituum. Representat.* In fact the Church does not mean to celebrate the anniversaries but the *facts* which they serve to recall—She makes them present to us. She supposes they are being done, that we see them and have them before our eyes—*Cras erit vobis salus.* She says : *Hodie natus est nobis Salvator.* For being always living and always the same since Her institution, She has a right to consider Herself acting at every epoch of Her history ; to mount up to the time of Her birth and to offer Herself as witness of the facts She narrates, and the more so because the substance of these mysteries continues in Her bosom and because She perpetuates their fruits by renewing the memory of them.

over all their circumstances, understand all the reasons for them, and gather all their graces.

In the first place then, Our Lord's birth marks and consecrates the beginning of the year and of the Office. It is preceded by the time of Advent, that is to say, by four weeks of preparation and expectation intended to recall to our mind the four thousand years that passed before the coming of the Redeemer. It is followed by the festivals which are connected with the Childhood of the Word made flesh: the Circumcision, the Epiphany, the holy name of Jesus, the Presentation in the Temple, etc.

After having honoured the Infancy of Jesus and His Hidden Life, the Church directs our thoughts towards His Passion and Death. But in order that we may appreciate the benefit of our redemption and become penetrated with the spirit of sacrifice, She begins by recalling to us during two entire months the need we had of a Saviour, and the motives that press us to do penance. She prepares us for the contemplation of the sufferings of the Man-God by the history of His temptations, and for His crucifixion by His fast of forty days, which She proposes for our imitation.

The Resurrection which has begun for us a new destiny, all glorious and heavenly, opens up in the Office a new liturgical period distinguished from the former by its joy and jubilation.\* This period is naturally pro-

\* Illud quod est ante Pascha significat tribulationem in qua modo sumus quod vero post Pascha beatitudinem in qua erimus. . . . Quid habituri sumus in illa Patria? Quid acturi sumus? *In sæcula sæcularum laudabunt te* inquit. hoc erit totum negotium nostrum sine defectu Alleluia, S. Aug. in Ps. cxlviii. The Alleluia taken up and repeated so often in Paschal time is a song of heaven. It was sung for the first time on earth by the prophet Aggai at the

longed until the return of the Son of God to heaven by His Ascension, and even until the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Church on Pentecost Sunday.

The remainder of the time from Pentecost till Advent corresponds to the reign of Our Lord in heaven and over the Church. Incomplete as it is, this reign is already magnificent and incomparable, and it will shine in all its splendour on the day of the universal judgment, the announcement of which terminates the liturgical year.\*

### § III.

Like these mysteries which have a living picture of the mind of Christ, the books of Holy Scripture also the expression of His thoughts fill the Divine Office, and divide among them the course of the year. Now, there is between them both a too obvious relation and a too sustained harmony for it to be supposed that this correspondence can be traced to chance. Here however we give the order in which these books follow each other and the periods in which they are placed.† During Advent, that is to say, whilst expecting the Nativity, we

sight of the rebuilt temple, according to the prediction of Tobias: *Per vicos Jerusalem Alleluia cantabitur.*—Job. xiii. 20; Apoc. xix.—In Septuagesima intermittitur quia peccato hominis veteris a conventu angelicæ jubilationis expulsi in hujus miseræ vitæ Babylonem, super flumina ejus sedemus et flemus dum recordamur illius Sion in qua Deum decet hymnus.—*C. Hi duo; De Consec. dist. 1.*

\* “*Ecclesiæ sanctissima prudentia ita distribuit totius anni officium ut non solum nobis proponat omnem vitam Christi Domini sed præterea ita temperat eum ordinem ut nobis proponat statum vitæ nostræ quo hic peregrinamur a Deo.*”—*Liturgicon, t. iii. p. 585*: Duaci, 1605.

† *Cf. Dist. 15 c. Sancta Romana Ecclesiæ* of S. Gelasius. See also the last part of S. Gregory VII., relative to the Office.—Rupert, *De divinis Officiis, xii., xxiv., xxv.*

read the prophecies of Isaias the Prophet-Evangelist of the Word made flesh.

From Christmas to Septuagesima Sunday, when we have to begin a new life with Jesus Christ, S. Paul is read—the Apostle *par excellence* of the God-Saviour—he who preached with the greatest zeal His coming into this world and who has most perfectly taught us what are the fruits *that* coming should produce in our souls.

At Septuagesima when the time of penance is announced—Genesis is taken to remind us of the sin of the First Adam—the cause of our fall, and of all the misery from which Our Lord, the Second Adam, has delivered us by His Death.

Between Passiontide and Paschal time, Jeremias is read, because he has foretold and prefigured more clearly than any other the sufferings of our Saviour.

After Easter comes the Acts of the Apostles which show the fruits of the resurrection of Our Lord and trace the origin of the Church, the fervour of the first faithful,\* then the Apocalypse, the gospel of the triumphant Saviour, the wondrous revelation of the kingdom He has obtained and of the glory into which He has entered by His Ascension ; lastly, the epistles of S. James, S. Peter, S. John, and S. Jude, all of which render homage to our Risen Lord, and to the wondrous power of His Grace.

Immediately after Pentecost is resumed the sequence of the historical books which was interrupted at Passiontide.† The clergy who replace on earth the Priests

\* A custom already established in the time of S. Augustine and mentioned by him.—*Serm. cccxxv. 1, and ccxlvii.*

† See Frenicle, *Explication des cérémonies et Officis, t. iii. p. 11, sect. ii. c. vii.*



of the Old Law find in the books of Kings models of their high vocation. There is Samuel the Levite, according to God's own heart, who merited by his innocence and devotedness to be put in the place of the children of Heli in the government of Israel. Saul, chosen at first for his excellent qualities, then rejected for his pride and ingratitude. David by turns a feeder of flocks and ruler of men, persecuted yet victorious, a sinner but penitent. Solomon, so wise and faithful in youth, then so blind and culpable; in fine the prophets Elias and Eliseus who uphold, at the peril of their life, the worship of the true God. According to Rupert, the first two of these books in which David is seen, though the mark of a thousand enemies, to come out of all his trials and seat himself gloriously upon the throne, recall the combats the Church had to sustain immediately after the days of Pentecost and the victory which in the end She obtains over Her enemies. The latter books which open with the division of the two kingdoms, and which are full of the most afflicting narratives are an allusion to the schisms and heresies that succeeded the persecutions, and which robbed the Church of more of Her children than did the tortures of the most cruel tyrants.

Following heresies and persecutions came the great doctors called by God to enlighten the Church and cause Her doctrine to be esteemed and respected. In the same manner, the Sapiential Books—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus, follow those of Kings. They are read during the month of August to fortify faith and animate charity and fervour.

During September and October again examples are brought to support counsels. In the histories of Job—

of Tobias—of Judith and of Esther are found noble examples of fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence. Each of these virtues is put to the test and all are rewarded according to their merit. The victories of the Machabees, moreover, remind us that the present life is a continual struggle, that our soul as well as the Church is surrounded by enemies, and that for both there is no true help but in God, and no rest but in heaven.

Lastly, in the remaining months, Ezechiel, Daniel, and the other prophets, whose oracles had supported, animated, and consoled the people until the time of the Messiah's coming, now renew their exhortations and their promises, and announce the immediate birth of the Son of God.\*

Thus each book whether of the old or of the new Testament, comes in its turn at the time of the year we are most disposed to understand it and profit by it ; so that far from withdrawing the attention from the mystery which is being celebrated, it offers the surest means for us to seize its meaning and to become penetrated by it.†

\* See Note VIII. at the end.

† It is not one of the least advantages of the Divine Office, says a pious bishop of Augsburg, Mgr. Wittmann, that it obliges the clergy to read again, at least once a year, the most remarkable passages of the sacred books—"Quot nostrum nisi lege ecclesiastica ad Horas adstringeremur, singulis annis totam scripturam percurremus? Et si qui id fecerint, an cum orandi affectu facturi essent, nisi inter preces quotidie singula loca legere deberent?" *De utilitate morali Horarum Canon*, Aug. 16, 1801: § 86. The venerable Odo, bishop of Cambrai, notes this advantage as the chief reason for the institution of the Canonical Hours. "Ut assuescant divinis litteris quas scilicet imbibere statim ac diligenter debent, ut eas ad unguem teneant."—*Append. di Liturg.*

## § IV.

The same plan applies to the feasts of the Blessed Virgin. Distributed through the year at convenient intervals and following each other in the most perfect order they complete the series of Our Lord's festivals by mingling with them in a pleasing variety. Some of them, like the Annunciation, the Purification, the Visitation, and the Seven Dolours, refer to Our Lord as well as to His Mother. As to the other festivals, such as Her Immaculate Conception, Nativity, and Presentation in the Temple . . . they may be regarded as a permanent preparation for the mysteries of the Man-God, which compose the foundation of the Office ; for at the very time that the life of our Saviour which has been unfolded to us seems to reach its close, the first scenes in the life of His Mother appear in the second scheme and announce for the approaching year the return of the same mysteries and solemnities.\*

## § V.

As to the feasts of the Saints, we should seek in vain in their succession that natural relation and sequence with the mysteries of the season. They mingle rather than form part of them. Still they do not hinder the general course of the Office ; and even their number and variety bring before us a fact of great meaning. When we consider them altogether as a whole does it not seem as if we beheld that great crowd which no

\* The Mother of God has, in the general Calendar, a feast of the first class : the Assumption ; five feasts of the second class, of which two have an Octave : the Nativity and Immaculate Conception ; and eight feasts of the third class : in all fourteen feasts.

man could number, chosen from every nation, state, age, and sex, whom S. John saw in heaven standing round about the throne of God, forming His court, and receiving our admiration and worship which they in their turn present to the Most High : *Turbam magnam quam nemo dinumerare poterat ex omni tribu et lingua, et natione.*\* How well is this glorious chosen band of Saints honoured by the Church, those countless thousands of pure, holy and heavenly souls, whom Jesus Christ has planted throughout the world, whom His Grace has nourished, and whom His Spirit has made fruitful and enriched with such precious fruits ! † How His Holiness shines in the splendour of their virtues ! How His Treasures appear in the gifts with which they are decorated ! *Dominus in eis, in Sina, in sancto.* ‡ Are not they the vesture of purple and fine linen that becomes His Sanctity ? the girdle of gold with which He decks Himself ? and the glory which He prefers to every crown ? §

\* *Apoc. vii. 9.*

† The Roman Martyrology reckons only 4600 names ; but Stadler in his Lexicon of the Saints gives more than 20,000 authenticated names. The *Acta Sanctorum* add to this number. And what is this number compared to that of saints forgotten or known only to God ? If we only reckon the martyrs they are innumerable, says Eusebius, H. E. viii.-iv. “ Quis cœli stellas enumeret,” cries out S. Theodore Studites, “ ac diffusam ad littus arenam ? Tot sunt martyres.”—*Serm. x., in Martyr.* “ Totum mundum aspiciate,” says S. Gregory the Great, “ martyribus plenus est. Jam pene tot qui videamus non sumus, quot veritatis testes habemus.”—*Hom. xxvii., in Ev.* The learned F. Floras, summing up the labours of the learned upon this subject, in his great work upon the martyrs *De inclyto agone martyrum*, reckons that not less than eleven millions were slain in the first three centuries, and that the number of those who shed their blood in the single city of Rome, was not less than two and a half millions (IV. iii. 1). Cf. Ferrarius, *Biblioth. Art. Martyres.*

‡ *Psalms lxvii. 18.*

§ “ Vidi similem Filio hominis vestitum podere et præcinctum Zona Aurea.”—*Apoc. i. 13.* “ Et datum est illi ut co-operiat se byssino splendenti et candido ;

*Te gloriosus apostolorum chorus, Te prophetarum laudabilis numerus, Te martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus !*

We know that the Church does not consecrate the same Office to all the Saints. The more clearly to show forth the virtues of each and to manifest in a brighter light the riches of Divine Grace She has distributed them into seven orders : Apostles, Martyrs, Bishops, Doctors, Confessors only, Virgins and Holy Women. These are like the seven rays of the Sun of Justice that lightens the heavenly city, or the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, Fount of all Sanctity. By joining to them the Blessed Virgin we have the number of the Beatitudes, the fulness of perfections and the variety of virtues.

These seven classes of Saints furnish to the mind as many different points of view for considering the psalms, and the different applications they suggest discover the riches of the daily prayer.\* We may add that for the Apostles and Martyrs the Breviary has two offices. Besides the Office of ordinary times consecrated to the celebration of their victories, virtues, and merits, it has that of Paschal time, when the Church, entirely absorbed in the thought of heaven occupies Herself in celebrating the glory which they enjoy near their Risen Lord.

Lastly, as to the solemnity of these festivals, we distinguish three degrees or rites—the simple, the semi-double, and the double ; not that the Church presumes

byssinum autem justificationes sunt sanctorum" (*xix. 8*). "Et iris in circuitu sedis similis visioni smaragdinae" (*iv. 3*). "*Præcinctum Zona Aurea id est sanctorum caterva quibus quasi vestimentis pretiosis circumdatur, ut ait Psalmista : Dominus regnavit, decorem indutus est.*"—Pontificale *Ordin. Subd.*

\* "Psalmorum varietas aut pretiosissimo lapidi topazio aut pulcherrimo pavoni congrue forsitan comparatur, qui toties diversos reddunt colores corporis sui quoties in eis defixus fuerit oculus intendentis."—Cassiod, *In psalm.*



to fix the merits of Her saints and the degree of glory they enjoy, but because She thinks it is conformable to the views of Providence to proportion Her thanksgiving to the services She has received from them, and to measure the honours She renders to each of them according to the external splendour it has pleased God to give to their virtues. \*

## § VI.

We have not spoken of the division of the year into periods of seven days which succeed each other without interruption. It is well known, and the hymns proper to each day recall it, that the week was designed from the beginning to honour the work of the Creator in the first six days of the world and the Rest into which He entered on the seventh. Whilst carefully preserving the remembrance of this primitive design, the Christian Church consecrates it especially to the honouring of the heavenly work of the regeneration of the world which was accomplished by the Word made flesh. Sunday, on which day our week begins again, is the day on which Our Lord rose from the tomb,† and also that on which the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles. It is the day on which our Redemption was completed and the Church was founded. It may be considered as the commemoration of those two mysteries: the days that follow,

\* See, for details, Dom. Guéranger, *Année Liturgique*. The clergy will find in this pious and learned work a precious mine for their own edification and that of the faithful.

† Father Louis de Grenada mentions a contemplative doctor who was so struck each Sunday on waking with the thought of the Resurrection of our Saviour that it seemed to him as if he heard all creatures of heaven and earth cry out: *In resurrectione tua Christe, cæli et terra lætentur*. Brev. Off. pasc.



or the ferias would then be as its octave and prolongation.\*

From the fourth century the entire Psalter has been distributed among these seven days,† so that each priest would recite the whole each week, were it not that often the Office of ferias has to give place to the Offices of saints. Such was the condition of things until the end of the middle ages. Accordingly the old writers have taken the greatest pains to comment upon these Offices of the feria and to account for everything that concerns them. The festivals increasing in number as time went on, the ferias became very few,‡ and the observations of

\* The word *feria* has a religious meaning in the Old Testament : *Hæ sunt feriæ Domini quas vocabitis sanctas.*—Lev. xxiii. 2. In the Breviary the official adoption of this term for the ecclesiastical language, and it indicates at the same time the meaning that should be given to it, is attributed to S. Sylvester. *Sabbati et Dominici diei nomine retento, reliquos hebdomadæ dies Feriarum nomine distinctos, ut jam ante in Ecclesia vocari cæperant, appellari voluit ; quo significaretur quotidie clericos, abjecta cæterarum rerum cura, uni Deo vacari debere, 31 Decembris, lect. vi.* Thus according to the mind of the Church there are no longer any *profane* days for Her ministers, and the entire year is thus a continual festival and a symbol of that eternal feast which the Elect celebrate in heaven. S. Augustine explaining to the faithful these terms adopted by the Church, recommended them to use them in preference to those used by the Pagans : *Melius de ore Christiano ritus loquendi ecclesiasticus procedit.*—In Psalm xciii. 3. He wished that Christians should always speak in a Christian manner, and that instead of terms which recalled the remembrance of idolatry, they should give to the days of the week names which should remind us that each of them belongs to the Lord and that we ought to consider them as so many feasts designed above all things to honour His sanctity. This custom has been established in certain countries, in Portugal, for example, where the week-day names of the Office has passed into the language of the people.—*Cf. Ven. Beda, lib. de tempore, c. 4.*

† Tradition attributes this distribution to S. Damasus and S. Jerome. It is found in the Antiphonary of S. Gregory the Great.—*Cf. S. Greg. M. lib. viii., Ep. lxi.;* Radulph, *De Canon, observ. Prop. viii.;* and Baronius, *Ann. 60.*

‡ See thereon Guyet, *Heortologia*, i. 1-20; and Gavantus, t. ii., sect. iii., c. 6.—Since the reform of the Breviary, ordered by the Council of Trent, the

which they are the object have lost from a practical point of view a great deal of their importance.

saints' feasts have become much more numerous. In the edition given by S. Pius V. they did not exceed 110, a hundred years later they rose to 170, now, after three centuries and nearly a hundred new canonisations, they number 210, for the most part of doubles. In the same space of time various feasts have been established in honour of the B. Virgin—the feast of the Presentation, that of the Seven Dolours, that of Our Lady of Carmel, of the Redemption of Captives—to supply as it were for the Little Office and the Office *in Sabbato* formerly prescribed. But the few ferias that remain, unless privileged, must nearly all yield their place to festivals proper to the different dioceses. But by a recent decree of Leo XIII., now happily reigning, the transference of any Feast lower than a *Double Major* is forbidden. Thus again the number of days on which it is possible to say the Ferial Office is increased.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE DIVISIONS OF THE DAILY OFFICE.

THE praises which the saints offer to God in heaven are never ending. It is not so with the homage we pay Him on earth. The conditions of our present existence and the multiplicity of our duties allow us only to devote a limited time to this duty. Nevertheless the Church desires that every day of our life should be sanctified by the recitation of the Divine Office ; and in order to extend its influence to every moment if possible She has divided the daily Office into divers acts or distinct portions, which She has named ‘Hours,’ because She designed them to be recited at certain fixed hours.\* These canonical Hours are seven in number, and this has caused the Divine Office, this holy fire of light and heat, to be compared to the sun, the seven rays of which daily enlighten, heat and vivify the whole of nature.†

1st. The Night Office,‡ which includes two parts—the

\* “Diversas orandi horas habere debemus, ut si forte aliquo fuerimus opere detenti, ipsum nos ad officium tempus admoneat.”—S. Hieron. *ad Eustoch*; item, S. Aug. *Ep ad Prob.*, cxxx. 18; item, S. Bonar, *de sex alis Seraphim*, 8. According to Baronius the apostles themselves established in the Church the custom of praying at certain hours and many times a day.—*Ann.* 34, No. 71.

† Rupert, *de divinis Officiis*, i. 1.

‡ When a festival is of a sufficiently high rank the Office harmonises with it from the Vespers of the preceding day ; we then say it has first Vespers. But these Vespers are only an introduction to the Office properly so called ; and the same reason applies to Vigils and Octaves. “Magnitudo festi a nobis exigit ut prius illud incipiamus et tardius terminemus : prævenimus vigilia ; prorogamus cum ad octavum diem festum protendimus.”—Radulf. *de can. obs. Prop.* xix.

one called Matins, because it begins at midnight or at the first dawn of day ; the other named Lauds, because the psalms and canticles of which it is composed have mainly for their object the praise of the perfections and works of God.

2nd. Prime, which should be recited at Aurora, or at the *first* hour, according to the mode of measuring time used in first ages of the Church.

3rd. Tierce, which was for the *third* hour, coming between sunrise and mid-day.

4th. Sext, for the *sixth* hour, or noon.

5th. None, for the *ninth*, between mid-day and sunset.

6th. Vespers, for sunset : *seras cum protulit horas Vesperas.*

7th. Lastly, Compline, which ends the Office, is said at the close of the day, and prepares us for the repose of night.

Liturgists who are persuaded that the Office is a work of great design and that everything about it bears the mark of heavenly wisdom,\* have asked why from the earliest times it has been divided into seven distinct parts, so as to distribute its recitation into seven different portions of the day ; and they have assigned various reasons for the custom.

Perhaps their explanations will at first sight appear subtle and far-fetched ; but we should be slow to despise them, because the doctors who expound them deserve our respect, and because the considerations on which

\* Upon the origin, antiquity, and reasons for this division consult Oliv. Bonárt, *de Institutione, obligatione, et religione Horarum Canonicarum*, 1 ; Grancolas, *De la messe et de l'Office divin*, p. 11, and *Commentaire historique sur le Bréviaire*.

they are founded are by no means worthless ; we may add too that the fitness they show offers at least a design which is pleasing and is calculated to fix the attention whilst elevating the soul and stimulating our piety.\* In the first place, it is certain that this particular number of parts was desired and sought after. Far from being of the essence of the work a double or triple division would have seemed in certain respects a more natural one ; and even assuming the present distribution of the Breviary what is there to prevent the separating of Matins and Lauds as well as Compline and Vespers, and consequently to reckon eight hours rather than seven in the Office of the day ? But the Church adheres to this number ; She has freely chosen it ; She purposely keeps it and prefers it to every other. Since this is the case is it not well to ask Her reasons, and is it not important to know them in order to animate ourselves with Her spirit and become penetrated with Her intentions ?† Among the Hebrews, and later among the Christians of the first ages, the number seven was regarded as a full and perfect number. Seven formed a whole, a sort of collective unity which was taken as the basis of numeration. They counted by seven days or weeks as we now-a-days count by tens ; they had their weeks of years and of ages as well as days ; and the custom of making seven a whole or conventional unity,

\* "Numeri ratio contemnenda nequaquam est. Nec frustra in laudibus Dei dictum est : Omnia in mensura et numero et pondere disposuisti."—S. Aug., *de Civ. Dei XI.*, 30 et *de Doct. Christ.*, ii. "Quam institutionem non temere, non inconsulto sancitam, secretiores causæ, symbolicæ rationes ac solis sapientibus, revelata mysteria consecrarunt."—Bona, *De Divina Psalmodia*, l. xi.

† Sic. Navarr. *Enchirid. de Horis Canon.*, c. iii. No. 27. S. Antoninus. Hugo a S. Vict. Rudolph. *Tungrensis*, etc.

entailed the practice of dividing by the same number.\* Whence came originally the kind of privilege attached to this number? From a religious and, in a sense, from a divine source. It was known that God had created the world in six days, and that resting on the seventh He willed that this week should serve as a measure of time, and should be indefinitely reproduced. This measure was in use among all nations.†

Thus the sevenfold number would naturally offer itself when it was a question of dividing as well as when it was necessary to enumerate the days.‡ But further, in this matter the Church acted for positive reasons and with special motives. David, whose psalms form the basis of the Office, wished to make known that his habitual occupation was to praise the Lord, and says in one of his psalms that the praises of God are upon his lips seven times a day: *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi*. Elias prayed seven times, *septem vicibus*, before the heavens opened and rained upon the earth. Nothing should be more agreeable to pious hearts than to imitate this example or indeed to verify to the letter the expression of the Prophet King.§ Besides, Our Lord having taught us

\* Cf. Gen. *Tolles septena et septena, vii. 2.* Septuplum ultio dabitur de Cain, de Lamech vero septuagies septies, iv. 24, &c. Multa in divinis auctoritatibus repereruntur, in quibus Septenarius numerus pro cujusque rei universitate poni solet.—S. Aug., *de Civ. Dei XI., xxxi.* Item S. Ambros., *de Noe et arca, xii.* S. Jer., *ad Amos. v.*

† Clem. Alexand.—Theophii. Antioch, etc.

‡ "Quia septem diebus omne tempus comprehenditur, recto septenario numero figuratur."—S. Greg., *M. Homil. xxxiii. in Evang.* Item. S. Aug., *Serm. cxviii. 31.*

§ "Septem synaxes omni die debemus sollicite reddere Deo pro nobis et pro omni populo christiano sicut Psalmista testatur dicens: *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi.*"—*De excerptiōibus Egberti Eboracensis, Ep., circa ann. 747.*



to make seven petitions to His Father, having Himself divided into seven parts the prayer He composed for us, was it not proper that the Church should follow His example and make likewise seven divisions in the prayer which Her ministers recite in Her name ?

We may add that this number recalls naturally to our minds the principal benefits of God both in the natural and in the supernatural order ; the creation of the world or the six days' work crowned with the rest of the seventh, the seven Sacraments of the New Law, the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost, *sacrum septenarium*, the seven great virtues theological and cardinal. Also it places before us the invisible enemies against which we have to fight : the seven devils who seek to surprise those who have recovered the liberty of the children of God ; also the seven capital vices towards which our corrupt nature seeks unceasingly to draw us.\* Lastly, the succession of these seven Hours renders more striking the likeness there is between the course of the day, the duration of our life and the whole course of time.

Cardinal Bona, in his learned and pious book upon the Divine Psalmody, took much pleasure in enlarging particularly upon this last connection. Starting from this principle that the day is the element of life, and that in the sight of God our entire life is no more than a day : *de mane usque ad vesperam*,† that they have each their

\* "*Septem nequitie sunt in corde.*"—*Prov. xxvii.* "Hostis antiquus septem spiritus assumit nequiores se ; adversus quos prævalere non possumus nisi septiformi Spiritus gratia adjuti. Itaque ad impetrandam septiformem gratiam, septies Deo Sacrificium laudis offeri mandavit Ecclesia."—S. Hier. *in Job.*

† *Isaias xxxviii. 12.*—Our Lord also represents our whole life by this name of day : *Oportet operari donec dies est : venit enim nox quando nemo potest operari.*—*Joan. ix. 4.* So also the Apostle : *Donec hodie cognominatur.*—*Hebr. iii. 13.*

beginning, progress, fulness and decline, he shows by most clear comparisons the analogy between the seven hours of the day with the seven ages of human life. In the night, in which the Nocturns of the first Hour place us, he recalls the image of that darkness in which we were before our birth: a profound obscurity which made our very existence a problem and a mystery. The Hour of Lauds, which corresponds to the dawn, recalls our infancy and those first years during which reason began to enlighten us with a few rays and we received the elementary notions of things. Prime, which is said at early daylight, is like youth, that sweet season of life, when the mind begins to be formed, and when the heart is at once so calm and tender. Tierce, bathed in the fires of the sun, is ardent youth, generous, increasing daily, and thinking to increase without end. At Sext, mid-day, when the sun is at its height and shines with all its brightness, we have a figure of full born age when man is in possession of all his strength, when ardour and prudence temper each other by a just equilibrium. None, announcing the day's decline, is an image of early old age—that age always in too great haste to arrive, whose progress nature watches with pain. Sunset, the Vesper hour, marks the period of decrepitude, that black season cold and mournful during which the strength fails and beauty fades. Lastly, Compline which is said in darkness supplies the idea of death and causes us to think of the grave. . . . Thus each corresponds to an 'Hour,' and the speed with which these Hours succeed each other should recall to us unceasingly the shortness of our life, the nearness of our last end, and the

necessity we are under to beg the blessings of heaven upon our whole existence.\*

It will perhaps surprise our readers not to find mentioned in the first rank, among the reasons for dividing the daily Office into seven different Hours, the intention of honouring the seven principal scenes in the Passion of our Saviour. The reason is that this intention did not appear from the first to have had any influence in the division thereof. Undoubtedly it is a very ancient devotion in the Church to honour each day the death and sufferings of Our Lord at the hours at which He underwent them. The traces of it are found in the Apostolic Constitutions,† and in the works of the early Fathers.‡ We may therefore suppose that this consideration contributed to establish the custom of praying at certain times of the day ; but if we went beyond this we put ourselves in opposition to history and mistake the effect for the cause. It was not from the fact that seven scenes in the Passion of Our Lord could be distinguished that the division of the Office into seven Hours resulted ; it was rather the desire to refer each Hour of the Office to some part of the Passion that caused some special incidents or sufferings of Our Lord to be selected. However this may be, this division and practice have been established for some considerable time, as these verses which one finds at the beginning of many breviaries and which were formerly well-known to everyone, bear witness :—

\* These resemblances which suggest themselves to our mind are expressed in many hymns at the beginning of the 'Hours,' e.g. at Prime ; *Ut cum dies abscesserit*, etc. ; at None, *Largiri lumen vespere*, etc., and at the night office of many ferias.

† *Const. Apost.*, viii. 34.

‡ See Cassian, *Inst.*, iii. III.

Matutina ligat Christum qui crimina purgat ;  
 Prima replet sputis ; causam dat Tertia morti ;  
 Sexta cruci affigit ; latus ejus Nona bipartit ;  
 Vespera deponit ; tumulo Completa reponit :  
 Hæc sunt septenis propter quæ psallimus horis. \*

This custom we repeat is very pious and very conformable to the spirit of the Church. It is not only useful for those religious persons who from defective education might not be able to take in the meaning of the words or of the proper object of the Office ; many clerics follow it and many of them recommend it strongly.† Yet we think it might be neglected without inconvenience, at least at certain times, and in some cases. In the matter of practice, it is not well to be too absolute. Beyond its being right to respect the inclinations of others, we should attach great importance to the circumstance of time. If we be disposed to be absorbed in the dolorous mysteries of our Saviour on the days devoted to them, for example on Fridays, in Passiontide, and in Lent, etc., should we not be doing violence to ourselves if we continued to be so engaged at times when other mysteries, as the Nativity, Ascension, or Pentecost are

\* At Matins bound, at Prime reviled,  
 Condemned to death at Tierce,  
 Nailed to the Cross at Sext,  
 At Nones His Blessed Side they pierce :  
 They take Him down at Vesper-tide,  
 In grave at Compline lay  
 Who henceforth bids His Church observe  
 These sevenfold Hours alway.

† It was one of the practices of M. Vianney, Curé d'Ars—*Vie* par M. Monnin, l. v. c. iv. We find in many writers special forms of intention to be recited before the Office of each Hour. See Horstius, *veri et pii sacerdotis idea*, c. xx., 1645. Lessius, *de Quinquaginta nominibus Dei*, l. ii. p. 116. J. Marchantius, *Virga Aaronis florens*, etc.

being commemorated? Is it not more natural and more useful to refer the prayer we recite to the object of the festival celebrated, both at prayer and at Mass, and the memory of which is constantly renewed by the words of the day's Office?

S. Bonaventure, who recommends this remembrance of the Passion to the clergy in a little work composed for their instruction, slightly modifies the preceding method. He advises us to recite the night Office in honour of the Nativity of Our Lord, Tierce in honour of the Holy Ghost and in memory of His descent upon the Apostles, Vespers in thanksgiving for the institution of the Blessed Sacrament at the Last Supper.\*

Whatever be the mystery attached to each Hour it is important to recite these Hours not only in the natural order but also at the time of day most suitable to them.† Supposing the whole Office to be recited without interruption, that Lauds or the Little Hours are said in the evening and Vespers in the morning or towards midnight, all relation of time between the Hours and the mystery becomes impossible; thenceforth the connections existing between the different Hours and mysteries being only imaginary they cease to produce any impression upon the soul.

Of course exactness in this matter is not possible, and the Church does not lay such a burthen upon Her minis-

\* "Officium divinum in ecclesia Spiritus Sanctus ordinavit fieri ut beneficiorum Dei memores certis horis gratias pro his laudando et orando ei jugiter referamus, Qui natus in nocte ex Maria Virgine, mane judici passurus assistitur, diluculo resurrexit, hora tertia flagellatur et postea Spiritum Sanctum mittit apostolis, sexta crucifixus, nona in cruce pro nobis mortuus, vespere coenans corporis et sanguinis sui sacramenta condidit, et completorio sepultus est."—*De sex alis seraphim*, 8.

† "Omni negatio tempus est, et opportunitas."—*Eccl. viii. 6.*



ters. But we should try to depart from it as little as may be. A certain priest used to apply to this subject what Solomon says in Proverbs, that a good word said in season is like golden fruit on a silver dish.—*Mala aurea in dilectis argenteis qui loquitur verbum in tempore suo.\**

Such are the principles of holy and pious ecclesiastics. They do not make it a duty to recite the seven Hours of the Office at seven different times ; but joining together the Hours which have a natural connection, they ordinarily make three divisions—nearly equal in length, which they recite with some intervals between them at the chief periods of the day. They say Matins and Lauds for the following day in the evening, the Little Hours in the morning, Vespers and Compline a little after mid-day ; and thus they have in the day, so to speak, three distinct and complete Offices ; that of the night, of the morning, and of the noon.

This manner of distributing the Hours and of saying the Office has been long authorised ; and whilst leaving sufficient liberty for the other duties of our ministry, it answers the design of the Church, and it extends to

\* *Prov. xxv. 11.* If the discipline of the Church did not somewhat restrain our liberty in this matter, the words even of the Divine Office would protest against a too long delay. Although we are not to pray for ourselves alone but for all men, is it reasonable to reserve for the night or the evening prayers appointed for the purpose of spending well the day : *Deus Deus meus ad Te de luce vigilo. . . . Iam lucis orto sidere. . . . Dirigere et sanctificare regere et gubernare dignare, Domine Deus hodie corda et corpora nostra.* We know that according to all Theologians it would be wrong to defer without reason the night Office until after Mass, or that of the morning till after midday. Ferraris, *Bibliotheca Canon, De Horis, art. iv. No. 15.* Justice not only requires that we should pay our debt, it requires also that we pay it within a reasonable time. *Beatus vir . . . fructum suum dabit in tempore suo.—Psalm i. 3.*



the whole of the day the influence of prayer. If we do not apply to ourselves in so strict a sense the words of David: *Septies in die laudem dixi tibi*,\* we may always say to the Lord, with him, that we devote to His praise the most important parts of the day; the beginning, the middle, and the end: *Vespere et mane et meridie, narrabo et annuntiabo; et Exaudiet vocem meam.*† We follow the example of Daniel, that Man of Desires, who prostrated himself thrice daily before the Blessed Trinity,‡ and we may suppose with him that we have to represent to the Lord the wants of the Church, His true city, the Jerusalem of the Prophets and Saints.

M. Olier characterises each of these portions with his usual elevation of mind. He distinguishes in the Spirit of Our Lord two principal dispositions, one of *religion* by which He praises the Father and pays homage to His perfections, the other of *love* for the Church which urges Him to plead in Her favour and to beg for us the abundance of divine life; and he remarks that the former of these dispositions shows itself almost only in the Night Office, and that the latter predominates in the Day Hours, and that both are expressed in almost equal measure in that of the Evening. According to M. Olier then the *Night Office* is properly the sacrifice of *praise*.§ It is an imitation and as it were an echo of the worship and blessings which the heavenly choirs offer to the Divine Majesty, and in which we shall one day by the Infinite Compassion of God take our part. It is well to keep ourselves in their presence: *in conspectu ange-*

\* *Ps. cviii. 64.*

† *Ps. liv. 10.*

‡ S. Cypr. *de Orat. domin. sub fn.*

§ "In die mandavit Dominus misericordiam suam et nocte canticum ejus."

—*Psalm xli.*

*lorum*,\* and to join ourselves with them and make their feelings our own: *ad societatem civium supernorum*.† The *morning* Office relates immediately to our present life which is as the dawn and beginning of our true existence. Accordingly it speaks to us only of Our Lord's sentiments in His wayfaring life: *in via*,‡ and of those things which are necessary for His members in order well to perform the journey of this life. The supplications with which it is filled have no other object but the destruction of Sin and the fulfilment of the Christian life within our hearts. The *evening* Office offers to our contemplation the glory Our Lord enjoys in heaven with a portion of His members—until the day of Judgment which will put the crown to His triumph and their happiness. It invites us to give thanks with them to the Divine Goodness, and at the same time it ought to excite our desires and make us ardently aspire after our last end.§

It has been already said that the Day is an image of our life, and that grace helps us to accomplish each day a work like to that which ought to occupy our whole existence. Moreover, the different Hours have been considered as parts of one and the same whole, and they, intimately connected together, complete it by their constant succession. As to the likeness ordained by the Author of the supernatural life—of which the Office is the manifestation—to that natural life such as it shows itself in the various kingdoms of nature, we may say that it has its foundation in the comparison in the

\* *Ps. cxxxvii.*

† *Bened. ante lect. ix.*

‡ *Ps. cxviii.*

§ Olier, *Mysterès de N. S. appliqués à la journée, et Divers Ecrits sur la Sainte Vierge.*

Gospel of the Word of God to the good seed cast upon the earth and to the grain that increases and multiplies. Now these principles being laid down, is it not reasonable to acknowledge a certain harmony between the development of the divine life under the influence of the Office and that of the natural life in the vegetable kingdom for example? As each act like every life, natural or supernatural, has an origin and tends to some term after having followed a certain course, so we distinguish in both three times or three successive phases. There will be in each the period of germination, of increase, and of fructification ; and, consequently, we may discover in the three great divisions of the Office the characters of these three periods ; spiritual regeneration in the night Office by doctrine, meditation, and praise of the Creator ; the life of the soul increasing and flourishing in the day Office by its love for the Divine Law ; and lastly the fruit of this life and of these acts gathered during Vespers and Compline.

These ideas we repeat are not simply ingenious, they are exact and well founded. But we do not think it necessary to insist further thereon, because to our mind they are more speculative than practical, in this sense, that their effect is to acknowledge the wisdom of the Church in this simple and yet at the same time profound work, rather than to furnish the soul in moments of prayer with pious affections and wholesome thoughts. Moreover, we reserve for the following chapters those reflections which have a special connection with each particular Hour.

## TREATISE THE SECOND.

*Of the different parts of the Daily Office.*

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### SECTION I.

OF THE NIGHT HOURS.

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### CHAPTER I.

MATINS.

#### § I.

“MATINS” are the beginning of the daily Office and the principal part of the Office at night. Chanted formerly in every church at the time when the whirl of life being suspended on earth, God’s ministers watched alone before Him and glorified His Name.\* Even now on Christmas

\* S. Gregory of Tours bears witness to the custom of every priest in his time (570) of attending this Office. Speaking of a clerk who had put up during his journey at the house of a very poor host, he adds—“Juxta morem Sacerdotum nocte a stratu suo consurrexit et oratione astitit.”—*De Gloria Sacerd.* xxxi. He himself having come to Paris, and dwelling near the Church of S. Julian, made it a duty to attend every night at Matins in that church. “Nos media surgentes nocte ingressi sumus basilicam explere Cursum.”—*Hist. ix., vi.* According to the testimony of Vincent of Beauvais, S. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, whilst Professor at the University of Paris (1210-20), did not fail to go nightly to the Church of S. Mederic to sing the Office. Louis de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris (1492), attended every night the singing of Matins. S. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, did not go to his Cathedral, but he never

night, we may judge what impression these chants produced, and what effects they must have wrought in the souls of the worshippers of olden times.\* The absence of external circumstance of time and place requires compensation in private recitation, and this is found in a more careful preparation. We would advise therefore a few moments' reflection upon the mystery or upon the virtues of the saint who is to be honoured, proposing to ourselves at the same time some favour to be obtained either for ourselves or for others, and also exciting ourselves in a lively manner to devotion and confidence by uniting ourselves to Our Lord, to the elect in heaven, and to all who fulfil with us the same function on earth; in fine, we should endeavour to be faithful to the general advice given on the manner of preparing for the Divine Office. Should this preparation take some little time we should not grudge it, for the fruit of the Office, the merit, the lights, and the salutary motions we may look for depend much upon this condition.

In order to reunite here all that may prove of some use, we will, for this Hour, and for those that follow, enter into some details. Thus the spirit and beauty of the whole will be all the more appreciated, the more we understand the meaning, the reason, and the value of each of its parts.

failed to rise to recite the night Office with his clerks, whilst at the same hour his Chapter chanted it in choir. Rainaldi, *Ann. Eccles.*, 1459, No. 33. See also Thomassin, *Ancien. et nouv. Discipl. t. I. I., II., c. lxxiv., lxxix.*

\* See S. Fr. de Sales, *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, viii. x., and Cæsai De Bus, *Instructions famil. t. i. sa Vie.*

## I. THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE OFFICE.

*Pater noster, Ave Maria, Credo.*

Could the Church better testify Her desire to see us recite the Divine Office in union with our Saviour, in His intentions, in His spirit, than by fixing our thoughts from the very beginning upon the Eternal Son, praising and invoking His Father and obliging us to repeat word for word His very own prayer? In order to enter into these views we must place ourselves in spirit near our Divine Master, and then imagine, as S. Theresa advises us to do, that we are of the number of His first disciples,\*—*divina institutione formati*,† and that He says to each one of us: *Sic vos orabitis*.‡ Next we must learn from His lips each petition and repeat it, as did His apostles, with an entire trust in His merits. If we are well penetrated with these dispositions it will be easy to retain them during the remainder of the Office, and the more so that the seven petitions of the *Pater*, expressing in brief the feelings of our Saviour towards His Father, include also of necessity all the wants of the Church and every prayer which we have to offer for Her.§ So to the *Pater* succeeds the *Ave Maria*. In the Mother of God the Church offers to our contemplation a perfect model of the union which we should have with Jesus Christ; She seems to say to us with S. Ambrose: Become filled with the spirit of Mary: *Sit in singulis*

\* S. Theresa, *Chemin. de la perfection*, xxv.

† *In Missale*.

‡ *Matth. vi. 9.*

§ "Quantum substringitur verbis tantum diffunditur sensibus . . . ut revera in oratione brevium totius Evangelii comprehendatur."—Fert. *de Orat.*



*spiritus Mariæ ut magnificet Dominum.\** It is fitting to take Her as advocate and help as the apostles did when they were assembled in the upper chamber.

These two prayers are said before all the Hours except Compline, in which the *Ave Maria* is replaced by the Confiteor. At Matins and Prime, that is to say at the beginning of the Office and at the first dawn of day, the Apostle's Creed is added. Faith being the foundation of every supernatural work and Christian virtue, it is right to reanimate it by a fervent act in approaching God in prayer: *Credere enim oportet accedentem ad Deum.*† In reciting then the Creed we should remind ourselves distinctly of the dogmas it contains and also the benefits it recalls, and join to an oral profession a complete and lively adhesion of the soul: *Corde enim creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem.*‡

We remember an ecclesiastic whose modesty and religious spirit always edified us; we cannot describe the tone of conviction, of confidence, of love, with which he used pronounced these words: *Credo in Deum . . . Et in Jesum Christum . . . Credo in Spiritus Sanctum . . . Sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam.* . . . It was evident that the Creed placed before his eyes, together with the principal truths of Christianity, that innumerable multitude of believers with whom he was united. We felt how happy he was to repeat with and after so many saints, confessors, and martyrs the profession of faith which was framed by the apostles in the first days of the Church.§

\* *In Luc. ii. 26.*

† *Hebr. xi. 6.*

‡ *Rom. x. 10.*

§ When S. Philip of Neri recited the *Credo* aloud he seemed always to tremble at these words: *Et in Jesum Christum*, etc. Father Alvarz, whose virtue was so much esteemed by S. Theresa, was speaking doubtless of himself when he said: "Novi ego quemdam servum Dei qui cum in sacrificio missæ

*Domine labia mea aperies.*

These preparatory prayers finished we expressly invoke the Divine Grace. The Church's Minister acknowledges his unworthiness and incapability of praising the Lord. He calls to mind that God reproaches the sinner with violating in practice a law which he extols in words; he remembers that to be a worthy messenger of the Most High the lips of Isaias needed purification with a burning coal; he reflects that no one is able, unaided by the Holy Ghost, to conceive even a good thought, nor to invoke as he ought the holy name of Jesus,\* and therefore renouncing his own spirit to give himself up to the Holy Ghost Who deigns to supply our weakness, he addresses to Our Lord those words of humility and trust taken from the penitential psalm: *Domine labia mea*, etc.†

“Lord! Who art present by Thy Spirit to enlighten me with Thy rays and to inflame my heart with Thy Love, deign to form within me those sentiments which the Office I am about to recite requires.‡ Without the dew of Thy grace my soul would remain dry and parched like the sands of the desert. *Sicut terra sine aqua*;§ my lips would be but as the tinkling cymbal, and the sounding brass: *Sicut æs sonans et cymbalum tinniens*.|| Let the impious man pretend to be sufficient for himself: let him proudly say: *Labia nostra a nobis sunt*;¶ for me, O Lord, I pray that Thou wilt reign

symbolum attente dicebat et actus fidei interius subinde faciebat, mira quadam suavitate mentisque serenitate replebatur; quam etiam experietur et in rebus fidei amplius roborabitur qui illud cum hac attentione protulerit.”—*De Studio orationis, lib. i. p. 11, c. xiv.*

\* *Ps. xlix. 76; Is. vi. 6; II. Cor. iii. 5; I. Cor. xii. 5.*

† *Ps. l. 17.*

‡ *Joan. xiv. 6.*

§ *Ps. cxiii. 6.*

|| *I. Cor. xiii. 1.*

¶ *Ps. xi. 5.*

over me absolutely and give power to my lips. *Laus mea tu es.\* Quoniam non est sermo in lingua mea.†* Open my mouth to praise Thee, by opening my heart and mind to Thy grace.‡ Then my tongue shall worthily sing Thy greatness: *Exultabunt labia mea cum cantavero tibi; sed et lingua mea tota die meditabitur justitiam tuam.§*

These first words require to be said with humility, confidence, and fervour. In proportion as we feel confounded at the thought of our own wretchedness, so ought we to be stayed up by the thought that the Holy Ghost is within us and that He desires to make use of us to produce and multiply before the Divine Majesty that worship which He unceasingly pays to It in the Person of our Adorable Saviour.

The sign of the Cross which the priest traces on his lips whilst saying *Domine labia* should remind him of the fiery coal from the altar that purified the lips of the prophet. By that which he makes over his heart he bears witness to his utter helplessness to praise God and asks that the graces of which he stands in need should penetrate to his very interior even to the source of thought and affection. *Munda cor meum et labia mea.||* All his hope being in the grace of his Saviour, the sacred minister loudly calls for the help he needs: *Deus in adjutorium meum intende: Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.¶* The *Gloria Patri* which imme-

\* *Jer. xvii. 14.* † *Ps. xxxviii. 4.*

‡ "Non te laudabunt labia mea, nisi me præcedat misericordia tua. Dono tua te laudabo. Non enim ego possum laudare Deum, nisi mihi donet laudare si."—S. Aug. in *Ps. lxii. 12.*

§ *Ps. lxx. 24.*

|| Missale, *Ante Evangelium*.—Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.—*Ps. 1-12.*

¶ *Ps. lxix. 1, 2.*

diately follows indicates the end for which we desire to recite the Office. It may also be considered as a cry of gratitude. God cannot close His ear to such a prayer, and therefore it is but just to thank Him without delay for the grace He gives us to invoke Him through His Son.

We may see in Cassian how dear and habitual was this invocation: *Deus in adiutorium* to the first Christians. Whilst explaining the meaning of these words, he shows they include the most salutary of prayers, the epitome of every petition which we can make to God. He calls it: *Formula pietatis, jugis oratio*.\*

By the sign of the Cross which accompanies it, we acknowledge that all grace flows from the sacrifice of the Cross; we consecrate our whole soul to God; and closing the door of our heart to the enemy of our salvation, we seem to say with the valiant soldier of Christ: *Ego signo crucis protectus hostium cuneos penetrabo securus*.†

### *The Invitatory and Venite Exultemus.*

The object of the Invitatory is to animate within us the spirit of prayer by fixing our thoughts upon Him Who constitutes the object of our adoration and praise. It has the same relation to the Office that the text has to a discourse; it is the primary thought to which every other is subordinated, the centre to which all the affections tend; it is repeated many times, so that we may well understand it—grasp all its extent and become deeply penetrated with it.

\* *Coll. x. 9.*

† *Officium S. Martin, Turon; Olier, Catechisme chrétien pour la vie intérieure, II. xii.*

There are some who listen to this Invitatory as though they heard the voice of a heavenly messenger summoning the friends of the Bridegroom to the banquet, or, as that of the Church in heaven inviting the Church militant to unite with Her in one common adoration. Such a thought should awaken us to sentiments of fervour and joy. "Yesterday," wrote S. Francis de Sales, "the feast of S. Peter's chains, whilst they were singing in choir the Invitatory, *Come let us adore the King of the Apostles*, I felt so sweet and pleasing a fervour that nothing could exceed it; and I ardently desired that it should flow over my whole heart. Oh, mayest Thou, Oh God our Saviour, be ever all things to us!"\*

The 94th Psalm, *Venite Exultemus*, is the development of the Invitatory as the Invitatory is the refrain of the Psalm and its application to the object of the festival. This psalm is the more worthy of being studied with care since it is daily repeated,† and likewise because the manner in which we recite it has great influence upon the Office that follows.

It is Jesus Christ whom we hear inviting us. He addresses all His members and calls upon them to bless with Him the Sovereign King. To animate their ardour He draws the most striking picture of the works of God and of His perfections, and awakens in the mind reverence and love—two dispositions which sustain each other and are essential to the spirit of religion. The first part of the psalm should inspire a strong desire to praise God as He merits; the second should

\* *Lett. dcccxiv.*

† Except upon the Epiphany, on which occasion we are sufficiently invited by the mystery itself to come and adore Jesus Christ and to glorify God in and through Him.



caution us strongly to guard against indifference and carelessness in the discharge of this duty. Both are of a nature to give us a high esteem for the ministry we fulfil and of the Infinite Majesty Whose greatness we are about to celebrate.

Starting from the first words *Venite adoremus* it is well to recall to mind the blessed in heaven, the saints on earth, and in particular those many worthy souls who are engaged like ourselves in praising the Divine Majesty. In spite of time and space they form but one body with us, and we should all therefore be animated with the same spirit. Then we unite ourselves with Jesus Christ, the Head of this divine body, and invite all His members to redoubled fervour in the homage which they with Him pay to the Eternal Father. We should likewise bestow a thought upon those sinners and infidels who praise not God as they ought. We should ask that their illusions may be dissipated, that the hardness of their hearts may be softened, and that they may cease to forget the power, the justice, and the goodness of their Sovereign Master. Nothing can be more conformable than this to the spirit of Our Lord, Who is all charity and zeal. *Ignem veni mittere in terram et quid volo nisi ut accendatur ?*\*

### *The Hymn.*

The hymn which follows the Invitatory is likewise intended to excite the attention and the affections in regard to the object of the day's festival. Written in peculiar language, both solemn and harmonious, naturally demanding singing, breathing joy and causing admira-

\* *Luc. xii. 49.*



tion, this portion of the Office is specially fitted to raise the thoughts towards heaven ; in fact, it should unite us to the transports and delights of the Church triumphant.\* As the hymns vary according to the Office and as their number is considerable, it would be difficult here to enter into details ; but we here repeat the advice we have already given, to study these hymns at leisure—particularly those which are most frequently recited. Their poetry is usually simple enough ; a mind familiarized with Scriptural language and the constant reference to mysteries will easily meet their difficulties. Still it is well to read them at first with reflection, and even to seek upon certain points the explanations given by the commentators. By this means we shall spare ourselves trouble in prayer, and shall escape the danger of having to hesitate as to the true meaning of certain terms not used in classical Latin.

## § II. THE MAIN PART OF MATINS.

### *The Nocturns and Psalms.*

On ferias and during the Octave of Easter and Pentecost the night Office has but one nocturn ; but generally there are three, each composed of certain psalms and lessons. Ordinarily the psalms for each nocturn are three in number ; but the single nocturn of ferias and the first of Sundays have twelve.

\* “ Hymni sunt cantus continentes laudem Dei. Si sit laus et non sit Dei, non est hymnus. Si sit laus Dei et non cantetur, non est hymnus. Oportet, ut sit hymnus, habeat hæc tria, et laudem, et Dei, et canticum.”—S. Aug. *In Ps. lxxii.* Hymns were, at an early date, authorized in the Church. *Hymni matutini et vespertini omnino decantentur*, says the Council of Agde, c. xxx. (506). But they do not appear to have formed a portion of the Breviary before the 11th century. Even now there are none for Easter day.

These numbers three, nine and twelve, are in the opinion of liturgists, symbolical ; that is to say, they are chosen designedly to suggest religious thoughts or remembrances connected with the festival.

The three nocturns of feasts as all divisions by three recall in the first place the Three Divine Persons, from Whom every gift flows and to Whom all glory should flow in return. They should likewise make us think of the three principal virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, which are as it were the essence of the divine worship and the source of true merit.

On account of their succession and the interval that formerly separated them, they might recall the three prayers of Our Lord at Gethsemani,\* or the days He passed in the tomb before the resurrection ;† but they are ordinarily given as representing the three ages of the world in regard to Religion, under the laws of nature, of Moses and of Christ ; and we are told to observe that the lessons become clearer and clearer and end by the Gospel and *Te Deum*.‡

As to the nine psalms which compose the nocturns, taken together, they represent the nine Choirs of Angels, and the more so that like them they are divided into three groups equal in number. They invite us then to unite ourselves to the celestial spirits like the saints do whom we honour, and to glorify with them the adorable and eternal Trinity. The twelve psalms of the ferial days likewise draw our thoughts towards heaven. Their

\* Theod. *Peltanus de Orat viii.*

† Olier, *Mystères de Notre Seigneur.*

‡ “ Inter omnes divinas auctoritates Evangelium merito excellit. Quod enim lex et prophetæ futurum præ nuntiarunt, hoc redditum et completum in Evangelio demonstrat.”—S. Aug. *de Cons. Evang.*, I. i.

number characterises the Abiding City which contains twelve tribes within its walls, which has twelve gates round its enclosure, and which rests upon as many foundations, which are the twelve apostles.

M. Olier further remarks that these twelve psalms correspond to the twelve hours of the night as the twelve psalms of the Little Hours to the day. According to him the Church testifies thereby the desire to devote every moment to the worship of God and to sing to Him every hour a new song.\*

To some these observations will appear more ingenious than practical. But an important explanation, which all will allow to be most useful, is that which determines the proper object of each nocturn and the standpoint at which we should place ourselves in order to understand fully the recitation of the psalms.

Without pretending to lay down anything absolutely, and whilst mistrusting the exaggerations into which the spirit of system is apt to lead us, we here state what we have found most satisfactory in this respect as regards the Office of the Common of Saints—offices which it is well known occupy three-fourths of the year.

The first design of the Church at Matins is always to praise God for the saint She honours, to admire the ways of His Providence in his regard, to thank Him for the graces He has bestowed upon him.† Casting then a glance upon the destiny of this saint, and running over his history, She distinguishes three essential parts therein—the beginning, the middle, and the end; and She honours each successively. This is the object of the three nocturns.

\* Olier, *Exercices du Seminaire*, p. 161.

† Olier, *Supra*, p. 290.

In the first, the Church contemplates the saint *according to the idea of God* ; She admires the type upon which the Lord willed to form him ; She venerates the excellence and the merit of the vocation to which He destined him. Accordingly the lessons are drawn from the Scriptures and have for their object, if they are proper to the feast, the ideal of perfection to which the saint endeavoured to approach as apostle, martyr, doctor, &c. At the second nocturn, the saint appears to us *in his earthly life*. We consider the profit he drew from the graces he received and the manner in which he corresponded with God's designs. This is why the lessons contain an abridgment of his life. At the third, the Church contemplates the recompense he has received and magnifies *the glorious state into which he has entered*. Here there is a lesson from the gospel relating to the Kingdom of God, with an explanation by holy doctors, and this is followed by a canticle of thanksgiving.

In each of these nocturns the standpoint is fixed by the lessons ; but the anthems and psalms adapt themselves to it without difficulty and often very happily. It is true that in choosing the psalms, it probably was not present to the mind of the compiler to keep to so precise a plan. It is true likewise that the numerical order which it was generally desired to maintain put some obstacles in the way of choice. It has been done however according to the requirements of the subject with sufficient freedom, since it has been found capable of being extended from the first psalm to the 108th.\*

\* Thus these psalms are chosen among all those that compose the Matins of the seven days of the week. They run from the 1st to the 108th without interruption, with the exception of those at Lauds and Prime.

What we have here said will suffice to help an attentive mind in the understanding of the psalms and their application to the Office. However to prevent all hesitation and to render research unnecessary, we will indicate in a detailed and precise manner the chief idea of each psalm such as results from the position it occupies in the plan indicated and from the meaning of the anthem that accompanies it.

We have no need to repeat that these psalms are always, in our opinion, the expression of our Saviour's sentiments, that Jesus Christ is the model of all the predestined, and that no supernatural disposition can exist in the members of the Church that had not previously existed in a certain manner in the Head.

#### COMMON OF APOSTLES.

1st Nocturn.—*The Apostleship according to the Divine Idea.*

Ps. xviii. *Cæli enarrant.* The Mission given to the Apostle to evangelise the world.

Ps. xxxiii. *Benedicam Dominum.* The blessings promised to his labours and prayers.

Ps. xlv. *Eructavit.* The final victory and triumph that await him.

2nd Nocturn.—*The Apostleship realised in the Saint's life.*

Ps. xlv. *Omnes Gentes.* Supported by divine grace, the Apostle travels over the world and subdues the nations to the God of Abraham.

Ps. lx. *Exaudi . . . deprecationem.* He restores to his

brethren the right they had lost to the kingdom of heaven.

Ps. lxiii. *Exaudi . . . orationem.* He surmounts every difficulty and conquers all opposition.

3rd Nocturn.—*The Apostleship glorified in the person of the Saint.*

Ps. lxxiv. *Confitebimur.* His greatness in heaven is proportioned to his humiliations and sufferings on earth.

Ps. xcvi. *Dominus regnavit ; exultet.* The joy which he feels seeing his work on earth accomplished.

Ps. xcvi. *Dominus regnavit ; irascantur.* The share he receives in the empire of his Saviour in reward of his eminent justice.

It has been remarked that each of the Offices of the week is represented in this one and contributes its share to the praises of the apostles. The most striking applications crowd upon the mind : *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum . . . . Lex Domini convertens animas.\* Magnificate Dominum mecum . . . Venite filii, audite me : timorem Domini docebo vos.† . . . Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii : constitues principes super omnem terram ; propterea populi confitebuntur tibi in æternum.‡ . . . Dixi iniquis : Nolite inique agere ; et delinquentibus : Nolite exaltare cornu.§ . . . Dominus regnavit, irascantur populi . . . Confundantur omnes qui adorant sculptilia, &c. ||*

At paschal time these psalms remain the same, but the

\* Ps. xviii. 5. See lesson iv. and v. of Apostles, *primo loco.*

† Ps. xxxiii. 4-12.

‡ Ps. xlv. 17.

§ Ps. lxxiv. 5.

|| Ps. xcvi. 7.—The Christians sang these words, says Ruffinus, in the hearing of the Emperor Julian during the translation of the relics of S. Babylas. *Hist. Eccles. II. xxxvi. ; cf. Theodoret, Hist. III. xvii. ; Sozom V. xvi. and xix.*



others change. The object of this change is to place in relief the apostle in his quality of martyr and to make us admire the glory which this title causes him to enjoy near his risen Saviour.

COMMON OF A MARTYR.\*

1st Nocturn.—*The Martyr according to the Divine Idea.*

Ps. i. *Beatus vir qui non abiit.* His fidelity to God's law—the source of every blessing.

Ps. ii. *Quare fremuerunt gentes.* His courageous firmness in confessing Jesus Christ.

Ps. iii. *Domine, quid?* His contempt of death and triumph over all his enemies by power and strength from above.

2nd Nocturn.—*The realisation of Martyrdom in the Saint's life.*

Ps. iv. *Cum invocarem.* The help assured to the martyr and the consolation with which he is filled.

Ps. v. *Verba mea.* His joy and peace in God in life and in death.

Ps. viii. *Domine, Dominus noster.* His joy in his sacrifice and his exaltation through martyrdom.

3rd Nocturn.—*The glorification of the Martyr in Heaven.*

Ps. x. *In Domino.* The justice of the Lord towards His faithful witness.

Ps. xiv. *Domine, quis.* The entry of the martyr into the heavenly City.

\* See Dr F. Janner, *Das officium unius Martyris in seinem Zusammenhange erklart*; Speyer, 1867.

Ps. xx. *Domine in virtute.* The crown of glory awarded to his virtues.

The various applications are not less striking nor less numerous than in the Office of Apostles: *Quare fremuerunt gentes? . . . . Adstiterunt reges terræ . . . . Quid multiplicati sunt qui tribulant me? . . . . In Domino confido: Quomodo dicitis animæ meæ, Transmigra in montem sicut passer? . . . . Quoniam ecce peccatores intenderunt arcum . . . . Ut sagittent in occulto rectos corde. . . . Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus. . . . Dirupisti vincula mea, &c.\**

In paschal time there is but one anthem for each nocturn. The first places before us the type of the martyrs according to the divine idea; the second, his trials before entering into the rest of the children of God; the third, his glory in eternity. These anthems are the same for the feasts of apostles in Paschal time.

#### COMMON OF MANY MARTYRS.

1st Nocturn.—*The Divine Idea of a Martyr.*

Ps. i. *Beatus.* He who is called to martyrdom has the will of God alone for his rule and support.

Ps. ii. *Quare?* He is a victim who immolates himself to the Lord by the hands of his enemies and for their conversion.

Ps. iii. *Domine, quid?* By the way of suffering he attains to felicity.

2nd Nocturn.—*Realisation of Martyrdom.*

Ps. xiv. *Domine, quis?* Our Lord loves the courage of

\* *Ps. iii. 2, x. 1, cxv. 5.*

His martyrs ; He supports them by the magnificence of His promises.

Ps. xv. *Conserva me.* He helps in an admirable manner those who bear testimony to Him.

Ps. xxiii. *Domini est.* He opens heaven to them and draws them thither after Him.

3rd Nocturn.—*Glorification of the Martyrs.*

Ps. xxxii. *Exultate.* The joy of the martyrs in the possession of God.

Ps. xxxiii. *Benedicam.* Their crowning and happiness in heaven.

Ps. xlv. *Deus noster.* The share they have in the triumph of Jesus Christ and in His reign in the Church.

#### COMMON OF A CONFESSOR.

1st Nocturn.—*The type of the Confessor.*

Ps. i. *Beatus.* He knows, meditates on, and observes the whole law of the Lord.

Ps. ii. *Quare ?* He confesses it with courage and preaches it with fruit.

Ps. iii. *Domine quid.* God supports him and glorifies him in the eyes of all his enemies.

2nd Nocturn.—*The life of the Confessor.*

Ps. iv. *Cum invocarem.* His life on earth a life of prayer.

Ps. v. *Verba mea.* God blesses his conduct, and causes him to find a source of consolation in His works.

Ps. viii. *Domine Dominus noster.* The wonders grace worked in him, for him, and by him.

3rd Nocturn.—*The glory of the Confessor.*

Ps. xiv. *Domine, quis ?* His rest in God.

- Ps. xx. *Domine, in virtute.* His crown of glory in heaven.  
 Ps. xxiii. *Domini est.* His union with his Saviour and  
 his praise with God.

The versicles and responses mark the distinction between the Office of Confessors-Pontiffs and that of Confessors not Pontiffs. In one the quality of Pontiff is brought forward ; in the other, that of Confessor.

#### COMMON OF VIRGINS.

1st Nocturn.—*Virginity, according to the  
 Divine Idea.\**

- Ps. viii. *Domine Dominus.* The esteem in which God holds this angelic virtue.  
 Ps. xviii. *Cæli.* The praises it merits and the influence it exercises.  
 Ps. xxiii. *Domini.* The glory and blessing it will possess.

2nd Nocturn.—*Virginity on Earth.*

- Ps. xliv. *Eructavit.* The virginal soul is attached to her Spouse and follows Him with a generous love.  
 Ps. xlv. *Deus noster.* She resists temptations and perseveres through the strength of her Saviour.  
 Ps. xlvii. *Magnus Dominus.* Her love makes her faithful and constant unto death.

3rd Nocturn.—*Virginity in Heaven.*

- Ps. xcv. *Cantate.* The pure soul is united to her Spouse and enters with Him into His glorious rest.  
 Ps. xcvi. *Dominus regnavit.* She partakes of His Kingdom and enjoys His triumph in the Church.

\* Upon this office applied to the Blessed Virgin *Le Petit Office à l'usage des seménaires* may be consulted.—Nouvelle édition, Poussielgue, 32°.

Ps. xcvi. *Cantate quia.* She receives from His hands the crown of glory.

The same psalms serve for the Common of Holy Women ; but in this Office the idea of martyrdom or of innocence renewed is substituted for that of virginity. The second anthem like the Invitatory is changed with that intention.

As to the Offices, which have for their object a mystery of our Saviour or of the Blessed Virgin, we do not say that they enter quite so naturally into this class ; but still they do not differ so widely from it as might be supposed. We always find in the first nocturn lessons from holy Scripture expressing the designs of God relative to the mystery ; in the second a passage from the Fathers upon the solemnity of the day ; in the third, a gospel passage which raises the soul heavenward.\* The Office of the Dedication of a church partakes of this aspect. It turns upon the idea that our churches are the material representation of another temple, of a spiritual temple in which God desires to be adored whether it be in heaven or on earth.

1st Nocturn.—*Idea of the Dedication.*

Ps. xxiii. *Domini est.* The Church is purified and blessed in order to become the dwelling of the Lord.

Ps. xlv. *Deus noster.* It is sanctified to be His House for ever.

Ps. xlvii. *Magnus Dominus.* It is consecrated for the oblation of the divine Sacrifice.

\* Upon the Office of the Blessed Sacrament : *Die Schoenheiten des Officiums in Festo Corporis Christi*, by the Dr. Düret ; Wien, 1854. On the *Lauda Sion Altchristlich Kirchenlieder*, by C. Smirock ; Cologne, 1850. Cf. an article of M. Grange, *Revue du Monde Catholique*, 10th Feb., 1869.

2nd Nocturn.—*Effects of this Dedication.*

Ps. lxxxiii. *Quam dilecta.* It is the house of God.

Ps. lxxxvi. *Fundamenta.* It is the house of the Lord and the gate of heaven.

Ps. lxxxvii. *Domine Deus.* It is a sanctuary destined for the sacrifice of the Saviour and His members.

3rd Nocturn.—*The Mystery veiled under this Emblem.*

Ps. xc. *Qui habitat.* It is the heaven where Our Lord dwells and exercises His powers.

Ps. xcv. *Cantate.* It is the spiritual temple which the Saviour raises to His Father in the souls He consecrates to Him.

Ps. xcvi. *Dominus regnavit.* It is the holy City where the Divine Majesty reveals Its greatness and hears our supplications.

By this account we see that far from turning away our thoughts from the object of the Office the recitation of the psalms is calculated to penetrate us with it, and that on festival days at least there is never any reason for quitting the position in which the Invitatory and the Hymn have placed us from the first. \*

## THE ANTIPHON AND VERSICLES.

Each psalm is usually accompanied by an antiphon except in the Offices of ferias and at Paschal time when many psalms are united in groups. These antiphons have the advantage of giving variety to the Office and a short rest to the mind which might tire through a con-

\* Cf. upon the signification of the psalms of Matins, Amberger, *Pastoral theologie*, t. ii., 1868. J. Fluck, *Katholische Liturgik*; Glessen, 1853. Dr. Thalhofer, *Erklärung der Psalmen*, 3rd edit., 1871. Probst, *Brevier und Breviergebet*, 1868.



tinuity of the same thoughts ; but their "principal end is, in solemnities to keep the attention fixed upon the object celebrated, and on feasts of minor rank or on ferial days to bring out the passages of the psalms which most immediately touch the Office and which are as it were the key of the other verses.\* Moreover, certain antiphons have for their object even in the Common, the indication of the particular quality of the saint who is being honoured ; for example, at the Vespers of Confessors : *O Doctor ! . . . Dum esset summus Pontifex.*

By this we perceive there is a close connection and analogy between the Antiphons and the Invitatory. This latter expresses the leading idea ; it is the keystone of the arch towards which everything should incline ; the Antiphons are the secondary ideas prominent indeed but subordinate, by means of which all the psalmody is referred to the Invitatory. They are like the ties binding together the various parts of an edifice.

In cases below the double rite we content ourselves with saying only the first words of the Antiphon before the psalm. A priest should know the Breviary sufficiently well to call to mind, upon this mere indication, the sense of the announced Antiphon.

As to the versicle and response which follow the last Antiphon of each Nocturn, they have a character similar to that of the Antiphon. Ordinarily it is a raising up of the heart to God upon the subject of the Office, an ejaculatory prayer alluding to the hour of the night or day, or an invitation to praise, or thanksgiving, admiration, or petition and forms a natural transition between

\* *Ἀντιφωνεῖν*, *contra clamare*, to produce an echo. The anthems are in great part from S. Gregory the Great. Ben. XIV. *De Canon*, iv. ii. 10, No. 2.

the psalmody and the lessons to which we next arrive.\* After the versicle we recollect ourselves and recite in a low voice the *Pater Noster*. We consider the word we are about to read as a kind of supernatural food and seed of grace; and we ask Our Lord to dispose our hearts to profit by it: *Non in solo pane vivit homo. . . . Beati qui audiunt et custodiunt.* †

#### THE ABSOLUTIONS, BLESSINGS, AND CONCLUSIONS.

The short formulas that follow the *Pater*, the absolution which is pronounced by one in favour of all, the petition for the blessing, the blessings themselves, with the conclusions of the lessons, have their reason and manifest meanings in solemn celebrations; when distinction of persons and variety of functions make the Office a kind of drama or dialogue in action. In private recitation they appear less natural. They may be explained however by this consideration, that such recitation is at once both a memorial and supplement; and that in order to carry out the desire of the Church when we cannot perform the Office solemnly in choir, we should strive to supply the reality through the imagination, representing to ourselves the sequence and meaning of

\* Amalaire explains thus, at once, both the etymology and acceptance of the word. Versus est iter disponens de uno orationis affectu ad alterum. *De divin Off.* Ut qui psallendo divina torpent revertantur ad cor, says another liturgist. The same versicles are repeated several times in the same Office. Thus the versicles of the 1st and 2nd Nocturn recur after the little chapter of Tierce. After that of Sext those of the 2nd and 3rd Nocturns are repeated. After that of None we take up again the versicle of the 3rd Nocturn, and to this is joined the one to be said at Vespers.

† *Matt. iv. 4; Luc. xi. 28.*—"Rogare debemus Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam, ut aperiat cor nostrum in lege sua, ne semen verbi Dei quod audituri sumus, aut volucres comedant aut spinæ suffocent aut duritia petrae, frustrata radice, supplantet."—Rup. *De divin Off. I. xi.*

the ceremonies, and keeping ourselves united in heart and intention with those of our brothers, who have the means of giving to their prayer all its liturgical expression.

However the thought that inspired these formulas is the same in all the nocturns—it is this : that, in order to be worthy to hear the word of God and derive profit from it, it is necessary to have a pure soul and upright heart, and that we cannot too often or too earnestly beseech heaven to give us such blessings.\* The object of the Absolution is the forgiveness of sins and to remove every obstacle to the growth of the holy word of God in our hearts. Somewhat veiled in the 1st Nocturn, this meaning becomes more apparent in the 2nd, and fully manifests itself in the 3rd. The blessings have reference to the sanctification of the soul. Except in the last Nocturn they are given expressly in the name of each person of the Blessed Trinity. The conclusion of the lessons, which never varies, is a testimony of humility inspired by the divine character of the words that have just been read.

All the formulas are very pious and though brief they have a very extensive and profound meaning. In the Life of a holy bishop which has already been quoted—J. B. Gault, bishop of Marseilles†—it is remarked that he never pronounced them without great devotion, and that he often paused to meditate upon them. He was specially taken with the third benediction of the 2nd Nocturn : *Ignem sui amoris* . . . M. Olier also loved

\* “Revela oculos meos et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua. Da mihi intellectum et scrutabor legem tuam et custodiam illam.”—*Ps. cxviii. 18, 34.*

† *Life*, by Fr. Marchetti, xix.

to taste them; he found much consolation in them. "Once on S. Joseph's day," he says, "as I pronounced these words of my Office: *Benedictione perpetua* . . . it seemed to me as though I saw the bounteous hand of my God pouring out abundantly His grace into my heart. So filled was my soul therewith, so touched was I with His great love, that for a quarter of an hour's space I could only repeat continually—Oh Love! oh Love! what shall I do for Thee? Oh my Love! why lovest Thou me so much? why so many graces?"\*

#### THE LESSONS.

The lessons† which come at the end of each Nocturn suspend the prayers properly so called or aspirations towards God, but yet without interrupting our communications with Him. After having *spoken* to Him we *listen* to Him; after we have asked for His grace we receive His Counsel, we meditate upon His word. *Attende lectioni*, says the Apostle to Timothy. *Read the Scriptures with attention.*‡

The psalms it is true are the word of God as well as the lessons, in the sense that they have really the Holy Ghost for their Author; but in the Office the soul appropriates the words of the psalmist, and addresses them to God as the expression of her own personal

\* *Memoires, t. i. p. 261. Cf. t. v. p. 211.*

† *Dicuntur lectiones quia leguntur non cantantur, Durand.*

‡ *Tim. iv. 13.* "Scriptura sacra mentis oculis quasi speculum opponitur ut interna nostra facies in ipsa videatur. Ibi enim fœda, ibi pulchra nostra cognoscimus ibi sentinus quantum proficimus, ibi a profectu quam longi distamus. Narrat autem gesta sanctorum, et ad imitationem corda provocat infirmorum. Nonnunquam eorum etiam casus innotescit, ut et in victoria fortium quod imitando arripere et rursum videamus in lapsibus quid debeamus timere."—S. Greg. in *Moral, ii. 1; Dom. 1a Sept., lect. 4.*

feelings ; whilst, in reading the lessons she takes their teaching to herself as the expression of the thought and will of God. Besides they afford a rest and useful diversion during the psalmody. Whilst the emotions are calming down, the mind becomes enlightened and fresh rays of light dispose the soul to new affections : *Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis dum loqueretur in via ? \**

The matter of the lessons varies. Unless there be but one Nocturn only with a proper gospel, which rarely occurs, the Office always contains three lessons, taken from holy Scripture ; and if we except the solemn festivals which have proper ones, these lessons succeed one another day by day in the order of books and chapters, with the exception of three books only of the Old Testament † and those parts of the Gospels which are read at Mass, especially during Lent, and are explained during the third Nocturn ; all the inspired books succeed each other in due proportion ; and as we have observed each of them presents itself at the time of year most conducive to profit. ‡ “ I find a wonderful sweetness in these readings,” said a holy religious named Jerome d’Etienne, a friar minor of Aix ; “ I am transported at the thought that it is always God Himself Who is speaking, God Who acts, Who commands, Who punishes,

\* *Luc. xxiv. 32.* “ Oratio fit ipsa pinquior, dum mens recenti lectione saginata per divinarum rerum quas nuper audivit imagines currit.”—S. Isid. *de divin. Off. l. i. c. x.* “ Sicut ignis injecto adipe in majores flammās erumpit, sic orationis fervor meditationis atque lectionis sagina impinguatus, in largissimos divini amores æstus consurgit.”—Pet. Cell. *Epist. l. i. op. xx.*

† Judges, Ruth, and Esdras only : for the two books of Paralipomenon appear at the head of the Dedication Office, and the Canticle of Canticles on the Assumption, &c.

‡ See *supra*, part ii. ch. 1 ; and Note VIII. at the end of the volume.



Who pardons : God Who rewards, Who destroys, Who builds up again ! Oh, this is indeed God's book !"

The lessons of the 2nd and 3rd Nocturns do not thus correspond with those of the days that precede and follow. They are not determined by the season but by the nature of the Office. At the second Nocturn, on Sundays, an extract from some Father is read, which comments upon the book of Scripture read during the first Nocturn or upon the special spirit of the season. If it be the feast of some saint, we have an abridged account of his life or an extract from some one of his panegyrics. If it be some mystery that is solemnised, it is an exposition or eulogium of it by some doctor. The lessons of the 3rd Nocturn on saints' days, and on those that have a proper gospel, are always drawn from some Homily of the Fathers upon the Gospel.\* There are few writings more edifying, more instructive, or more interesting than these readings.

We have remarked above about those presumptuous critics, who, under the pretext of prudence, seem to have taken upon themselves, in their humouring the spirit of the age, to underrate the accounts which the Church gives us of the lives of Her saints.† To-day it is admitted that the greater part of the legends so rashly condemned by them, are authentic in matter and full of charms in form. Even those that were treated as fabu-

\* Here is an application of the doctrine of S. Peter : Hoc primum intelligentes quod omnis prophetia scripturæ propria interpretatione non fet. *II. Petr. i. 20.*

† They are satisfied, said Bossuet, provided they show themselves more clear-sighted observers than other men, and they think it a proof of their better sense not to believe so many wonders. *Instruction sur la version de Trévoux. Cf. Honoré de S. Marie, t. ii. l. ii. Dissert. ii. § 3.*



lous appear to be founded, at least the greater portion, upon strong probability. Many of them written at the time of the canonisation of the saint not only offer all the assurances of exactitude that are desirable; they seem still to breathe the spirit that animated the saint, and retrace in an appreciable manner the impression which the remembrance of his virtues and sanctity produced upon his contemporaries.\* As to the supernatural facts which they mention we must remember that if there be danger of too much credulity in unproved allegations, there is not less risk in a systematic opposition to facts which the Church respects and which seem to affect the glory of God and the honour of His saints. What humility demands in such matters and what wisdom inspires, is neither mistrust nor censure, but a pious deference and docile acquiescence. *Ubi est humilitas ibi est sapientia*, says the Holy Ghost.†

Again, the teaching of the Fathers is better appreciated now than formerly. Instead of exalting exclusively the Scripture to the neglect of tradition, it is acknowledged nowadays that the holy doctors are the best interpreters of the Divine Word, that their doctrine

\* We may cite in particular that of S. Scholastica, 10th Feb. ; of S. Catherine of Sienna, 30th April ; of S. John Gualbert, 12th July ; of S. Rose of Lima, 30th August ; of S. John Cantius, 20th Oct. ; of S. Martin, 11th Nov., etc. See Guyst, *Heortologiæ*, iii. iv. 3.

† *Prov. xi. 2.* Locutus es in visione Sanctis tuis et dixisti : Exaltavi electum de plebe mea. *Ps. lxxxviii. 20.* Quibus autem apparuerit in visu diligunt in visione et in agnitione magnalium suorum. *Eccl. i. 15.* Cf. *Prop. xx.*, Mich de Molinos damnata, 20th Nov., 1687 ; Deus numquam loquitur ; ejus locutio est semper oratio. S. Cyp. *Epist. lxxix., No. 10.* Scio somnia ridicula et visiones ineptas quibusdam videri ; sed utique illis qui malunt contra sacerdotes credere quam sacerdoti. Quid mirum, quando de Joseph fratres sui dixerunt *Ecce somniator venit.*, etc. Bolland, *Præf. Act. SS.*, c. iii. 32, etc.

has for its warrant not only their lights and their virtue but the authority of the Church which venerates them as Her masters ; and that it is equally advantageous and interesting to learn every day from some one of them what he taught upon the actual object of our meditations and worship.

These reflections suffice to show the importance of this part of the Office and the dispositions it requires. God constantly speaks in it to the soul to instruct and sanctify her. The lessons of Scripture offer us His Word in all its strength and in all its purity. In the Homilies of the Fathers we find its authentic development and true exposition. In the legends of the saints we observe its laws observed and its counsels put in practice. *Leges animatas*.\* Consequently we should ever remember these wise and Christian maxims : *Non te offendat auctoritas scribentis, utrum parvæ vel magnæ litteraturæ fuerit. Lege humiliter, simpliciter, et fideliter.*† *Si quid incondite et qui inculte dictum legeris, doctrinæ da operam, linguæ veniam.*‡ Seek only for truth that we may put it in practice ; and shun curiosity which dries up the heart and drives away grace.

#### THE RESPONSORIES.

After each lesson comes a responsory which serves as its complement. It is a return of the soul or an elevation of it to God upon what we have just heard or upon the object of the festival.§ The responsory is to the

\* S. Ambr. *de Jos.*, c. 1. The lives of the saints are to the Gospel what sung music is to written music. S. Fr. de Sales, *Lett. a l'archer. de Bourges*—*Leges animatæ et norma vivendi*, S. Ambr. *de Jos.* 1.

† *Imit.*, i. 1, v.

‡ S. Aug., *Ep. ad Consent.*, ccv. 19.

§ "Responsoria : quia respondent lectionibus, læta lætis succinente choro." Rupert, *De Off.*, 1, xv.

lesson what the antiphon is to the psalm, but it has a more specially practical motive : it tends to penetrate the soul with whatever the Office proposes as most remarkable and to suggest useful applications to the mind.\* By its purpose the responsory recalls an important truth ; that it is not sufficient to hear the word of God and dwell on it for an instant—but we must retain it, meditate upon it, and endeavour to fathom it,† and that after being penetrated with it, we must put it in practice : *Beati qui audiunt verbum Dei et custodiunt illud ! Si hoc scitis, beati estis si feceritis ea.*‡ With the exception of some proper Offices wherein everything that is possible is borrowed from the acts of the saint, the responsories are generally drawn from Scripture ; but they are taken freely like the antiphons—that is to say we often find different texts combined together, words suppressed or else added to clear up and complete the meaning. Many of these responsories are the work of S. Gregory.§ They are easy to understand, but it would be a work no less instructive than in-

\* For example these responsories of Apostles :—*Isti sunt triumphatores et amici Dei. . . . Isti sunt qui viventes in carne.*

† “ Quæ audistis, cogitate ; quæ manducastis ruminare, sic eritis munda animalia.”—S. Ambr. *in Ps. ciii. Conc. 19.* “ Quid enim prodest lectione continua tempus occupare, sanctorumque gesta et scripta legendo discussive nisi ea etiam masticando et ruminando usque ad cordis intima transmittamus ut studeamus coram opera agere quorum facta cupimus lectitare ? ”—Guiz., *Schol. Claust 11, apud S. Bern.*

‡ *Luc. xi. 28 ; Joan xiii. 17.* In cordis sinu verbum Dei abscondimus quando mandata illius non transitorie, sed implenda opere audimus. Hinc est quod de ipsa matre virgine scriptum est :—*Maria autem conservabat omnia verba hæc, conferens in corde suo.* S. Greg. *in Ezech.* Petamus orando quæramus legendo, pulseamus operando. S. Greg., *lib. vii., Epist. xxxvi.*

§ Those of the office for the dead are attributed to Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, died 1195, and those of Passion Sunday to S. Francis of Assisi.

teresting to set out the share in them of Scripture and of tradition and to compare the primitive sense of the inspired words in the sacred books with the more restricted and precise meaning which the Church gives them.\*

### § III. THE CONCLUSION OF THE NOCTURNS.

#### *Te Deum Laudamus.*

Nearly always the responsory of the ninth lesson is replaced by the *Te Deum*. Announced apparently by the last blessing : *Ad societatem civium supernorum*, this hymn very fittingly terminates the first part of the Office ; and it expresses in a manner, touching and solemn, the sentiments of religion, of praise, of gratitude, and of pious joy, which the preceding readings should have left in the soul. It has a great likeness with the angelic hymn, *Gloria in Excelsis*, from which it is seldom separated in the liturgy.

Every one knows that the *Te Deum* has been long attributed to two Fathers of the Latin Church, the great doctors of Milan and of Hippo. On the faith of a chronicle said to be of S. Dacius,† it was thought that after the baptism of Augustine, S. Ambrose and his neophyte transported with enthusiasm, and at the same time inspired by the Holy Ghost, expressed their thanksgiving by this sequence of alternative invocations : *pro ut Spiritus sanctus dabat eloqui illis*.‡ We should like

\* See J. Clichton, *Elucidationum*.

† *Chronic.* l. i. c. x.—S. Dacius was archbishop of Milan in 540. S. Gregory speaks in praise of him.—*Dial.* i. 3, iv. According to Mabillon the history attributed to him was generally admitted in his time ; but his *Chronicles* are far from being authentic.—*De Azyzo*, vi. Cf. D. Calmet, *Comment. sur la regle de S. Bessoit*, t. i. c. x.

‡ *Act.* ii. 4.

to have found this tradition solidly founded. Unfortunately, the alleged chronicle appears to be of a too recent date, and the silence of S. Augustine upon this circumstance, in the account which he has left of his baptism, would suffice to render it rather improbable.\*

Accordingly of late this hymn has been sometimes asserted to be the work of S. Ambrose alone : *Hymnus Ambrosianus*.† Indeed S. Ambrose's authorship in the case has been disputed as well as S. Augustine's. Quite recently it has been claimed as the work of S. Hilary of Poitiers, upon the testimony of Abbon de Fleury, an author of the 9th century, and that an account of the analogies remarked between the language of this holy doctor and the general tone of the *Te Deum*.‡

What however is certain is that this hymn dates as far back at least as the 4th century, and that it is worthy of the genius, no less than of the piety, of the greatest doctors. Never has Public Prayer been expressed in more solemn terms ; never have admiration, praise, gratitude inspired more sublime accents.§ In the Lives of the Saints and in the Histories of the

\* See *Conf. ix. 6, etc.*

† See Calmet, *Supra*.

‡ Mgr. Cousseau, *Memoires sur l'auteur du Te Deum, Poitiers, 8vo.*

§ There is but one voice in this matter. "It is not a composition," says J. de Maistre ; "it is an effusion ; it is burning poetry, unshakled by metre ; it is a divine dithyrambic due to enthusiasm—flying with its own wings—contemning all the resources of art. I doubt if faith, love, and gratitude have ever spoken a language more true and more penetrating."—*Soirée, Ent. vii. Cf. Wiseman, Dublin Review, Nov. 1842, p. 449.* The beauty of this prayer has caused it to be respected even by heretics. In spite of his invectives against the Breviary, *de abroganda Missa*, and although he would have only nine psalms in the Office—three in the morning, three at noon, and three towards evening—Luther was obliged to show favour to the *Te Deum*, as well as to the *Benedictus*, and even to the Creed of S. Athanasius, so cried down nowadays by a certain school of the Protestants.



Religious Orders we find many passages which show the power of this hymn to excite fervour and draw down the favours of heaven.

S. Lutgarde imparting to a pious and learned religious, Thomas de Cantempré, an account of the favours which God had granted her, told him that one day whilst reciting with her sister this verse: *Tu ad liberandum suscepturus, hominem non horruisti Virginis uterum*, she saw the Blessed Virgin smile on her with an ineffable look of peace and sweetness, and that she then understood what a joy it is to this Heavenly Mother to hear the Mercy and Compassion of Her Son thus exalted. In consequence whereof she besought Thomas, by the love he bore this August Queen, never to pronounce this verse without remembering the favour that God has shown to her His servant, and without offering to Him with her a special testimony of devotion and thanksgiving.\*

A similar vision is narrated in the Life of a Cistercian nun. This religious said to her sisters when on her death-bed that one night whilst the community was singing these words: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus*, she was caught up into heaven in the midst of Angels and Saints and had heard the choir of the elect singing the same canticle before the throne of God. This secret she revealed to them in order to persuade them always to pronounce these words with all possible fervour, and that they should feel convinced that their

\* "Intellexit Lutgardis versum hunc Virgini Mariæ gratissimum esse. Atque hoc illa mihi tanquam dilecto filio revelans admonuit ut quoties versum illum dixerem toto me corpore ad laudem sacratissimæ virginis inclinarem. Quod etiam diu feci et ut idem faciant lectores meus adhortor."—*Act. Sanct. 16 June.*



chants were echoed by the heavenly choirs, and that what they in their weakness sang here below was proclaimed on high by the blessed and eternally repeated by them to the glory of the Most High.

Here finish Matins the first part of the night Office. Before proceeding farther we think it a good opportunity to offer to the clergy a short spiritual and moral commentary upon the three nocturns of the Common of Confessors. By this means we shall complete our expositions and give upon that part of the Breviary most in use an example of the study we have advised. We shall do the same for all the hours of the Office. Obligated to choose from among the different common Offices we take that which is most frequently repeated and interests most the piety of the clergy.

## § II. AD MATUTINUM.

In nomine Patris, etc.

The Blessed Trinity is the beginning and end of every christian life and action. We should recall the advice of S. Fr. of Sales upon the sign of the cross.

*Dicitur secreto:* Pater, Ave, Credo.

*Secreto* . . . We are now preparing for the Office, and our heart is the chief thing to prepare: *Cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum tuum et ora in abscondito.*—Matth. vi.

Pater Noster, qui es in cœlis.

Expression of the most touching kind regarding love towards God and our neighbour which includes the whole law. *Pater*

Sanctificetur nomen Tuum,  
adveniat regnum Tuum, fiat  
voluntas Tua sicut in coelo et  
in terra.

Panem nostrum quotidiana-  
rum da nobis hodie, et di-  
mitte nobis debita nostra.  
. . . etc.

Ave Maria, gratia plena,  
Dominus tecum, benedicta tu  
in mulieribus.

Et benedictus fructus ven-  
tris tui Jesus.

Sancta Maria Mater Dei  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus.

Nunc et in hora . . . etc.  
Credo in Deum, etc.

*noster*: Pronounce these words  
in union with Our Lord and  
with all His members. Pater  
Meus et Pater Vester Deus  
Meus et Deus Vester.—John  
xx. 17.

The first desires of the Heart  
of Our Lord, chief end of the  
Office; lesson of zeal in the  
sacred ministry. *Quærite reg-  
num*.—Matth. vi.

Another design of the Office  
—*Panem*; the food of the soul  
as well as of the body—*Nobis*;  
to all the members of Christ,  
or of the Church His mystical  
body.

*Ave*. A term of greeting and  
of affectionate respect. We  
unite ourselves with the Arch-  
angel, the first who pronounced  
this salutation.

Words of S. Elizabeth—It is  
by His Mother above all that  
our Saviour is blessed; we  
unite with her in these benedic-  
tions.

An invocation of Ecclesias-  
tical origin. *Ave Maria* . . .  
*Sancta Maria*; a repetition in-  
spired by devotion.

Added more recently.  
Faith the foundation of all  
worship—the principle of every

prayer: *Credere enim oportet accedentem ad Deum.*—Hebr. x. When struck to death by heretics, S. Peter of Verona wrote with his blood upon the ground these three words: *Credo in Deum.*—29 April.

*Domine, Labia Mea . . . Deus, In Adjutorium.*

℣. Domine labia mea aperies. ℞. Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

From the Ps. *Miserere*. Open my lips that I may sing thy praises. *Quoniam non est sermo in lingua nostra.*—Ps. 138. *Quia nemo potest dicere, Dominus Jesus, nisi in Spiritu Sancto.*—1 Cor. 12.

℣. Deus, in adjutorium meum intende. ℞. Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.

From the 69th Psalm. A natural sequence of the preceding versicles. "When we say to God: *In adjutorium meum intende*, we should imagine Him to reply: And you, be you attentive to My presence and to My word."—S. Francis of Sales.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.

A summary of all the Psalms. Essential purpose and end of the Divine Office. *Afferte Domino gloriam; date Domino gloriam nomini Ejus.*—I. Parlip. 16. We should reanimate our intention each time we repeat these words.

Sicut erat in principio et

An imitation of the last verse

nunc et semper, et in sæcula  
sæculorum. Amen.

of S. Jude. Both time and  
eternity should glorify the  
Author of all things—*Amen*. A  
sign of assent expressing ratifi-  
cation—attesting that the heart  
is in unison with the lips.  
*Dicet populus. Amen.*—Deutr.  
xxvii.

Alleluia,\* or Laus tibi Do-  
mine.

Anthems that differ but little  
in meaning one from the other.  
The first refers to the Blessed  
Trinity and expresses a more  
lively sentiment; the second is  
addressed to Our Lord; it is  
suitable for times of affliction  
and penance.

#### INVITATORY.

Regem Confessorum Domi-  
num; Venite adoremus.

To be holy we must be pre-  
pared to *confess* our faith at the  
peril even of our life.—Rom. x.  
This is what Our Lord has pre-  
eminently done; He is, more-  
over, the first of saints, the  
principle, model, and rewarder  
of all sanctity.

\* A word of heavenly origin which has passed from the temple of Solomon to the Christian Church. "Ut alleluia hic diceretur de Hierosolymorum ecclesia, ex S. Hieronymi traditione tempore beatæ memoriæ Damasi papæ traditur tractum."—S. Greg. Magn. *Ep. l. viii. 64.* Cf. Raban, *Maur. de inst. Cler. i. xxxiii.*; Dinouart, *Journal Ecclesiastique, ii. 17.*

*Psalm xciv., according to the Roman Psalter.\**

Jesus Christ exhorts all His members and particularly His ministers to praise God with Him.

Venite exultemus Domino;  
jubilemus Deo salutari nostro;  
præoccupemus faciem  
ejus in confessione et in  
psalmis jubilemus ei.

*Venite*: Words addressed to all who should bless the Lord with us; we should also address them to our own mind and heart which wander so often from God.—*Intentiones, cogitationes, voluntates, affectiones et omnia interiora mea venite, ascendamus ad montem ubi Dominus videt et videtur.*—S. Bern. *Exultemus Domino.* God Who desires to be praised with joy desires to be so with love and complacency in His perfections. *Salutari nostro*: *Jesu nostro* according to S. Jerome; as the Blessed Virgin: *In Deo Salutari meo* in God my Saviour.—*Præoccupemus*: like the prudent virgins. *In confessione*: in the acknowledgment of His greatness and of our nothingness.

\* That is to say according to the Italic or old Latin version made upon the Septuagint and slightly modified by S. Jerome. The other psalms of the Office are here according to the Gallican version long ago inserted into the Vulgate version. It differs only from the Roman by a greater number of corrections also made by S. Jerome.—*Hist. de l'Eglise Cath. en France, l. xl. Opera S. Hieronymi, t. 1, p. 1219.*

Regem Confessorum Domini  
venite, adoremus.

Quoniam Deus magnus  
Dominus et Rex magnus  
super omnes deos ; quoniam  
non repellat Dominus plebem  
Suam ; quia in manu Ejus  
sunt omnes finis terræ, et  
altitudines montium Ipse  
conspicit.

Venite, etc.

Quoniam Ipsius est mare  
et Ipse fecit illud, et ari-  
dam fundaverunt manus  
Ejus. Venite, adoremus et  
procidamus ante Deum, plo-  
remus coram Domino Qui  
fecit nos, quia Ipse est Do-  
minus Deus noster, nos  
autem populus Ejus et oves  
pascuæ Ejus.

Regem, etc.

Hodie si vocem Ejus audi-

We repeat the Invitatory. It  
will be repeated again six times  
entirely or in part in order to  
engrave upon the mind and to  
thoroughly penetrate the soul  
with that which ought to form  
the object of its thoughts and  
intentions during the Divine  
Office.

*Magnus.* However little God  
makes Himself He is always  
Infinite—the only Great One ;  
let us adore His Greatness and  
bless His Mercy. *In manu  
ejus* : His Sovereignty is abso-  
lute like His Greatness. We  
are ever in His hands—whether  
in the hands of His Love or of  
His Justice.

Here we should humble our-  
selves at the feet of God our  
Saviour in the sight of His  
Almighty power. *Procidamus* :  
and remember that in choir  
all prostrate themselves at this  
word before the altar.—*Deus  
noster* : He is wholly ours by  
His tenderness and by His  
benefits—*Nos autem populus  
ejus*. Therefore we owe Him  
submission, love, and devoted-  
ness.

Passage cited by S. Paul to  
recommend submission to the



eritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra sicut in exacerbatione secundum diem tentationis in deserto ubi tentaverunt Me patres vestri, probaverunt et viderunt opera Mea.

Venite, etc.

Quadraginta annis proximus fui generationi huic et dixi: semper hi errant corde; ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias Meas; quibus juravi in ira Mea si introibunt in requiem Meam.

Regem. . . Gloria. Patri.  
Venite. . . . Regem, etc.

Gospel.—Heb. iv. *Qui ex Deo est verba Dei audit.*—Joan. viii. *Hodie*: Life passes like a day: *Adhortamini vosmetipsos donec hodie cognominatur.*—Heb. iii. *Nolite obdurare*: Fear above everything all hardness of heart and stubbornness to the Holy Ghost. S. Bern. *de Cons. I. ii.* *Ubi tentaverunt*: *Ne tentemus Christum sicut quidam tentaverunt et perierunt. Hæc omnia in figura contingebant. . . . ad correptionem nostram.*—I. Cor. x.

The more we advance in years the more docile should we become.—The rest that God would give to His people in Palestine was the image of that which He has promised to our souls at the end of our pilgrimage: *Etenim et nobis nuntiaturum est quemadmodum et illis. Festinemus ergo ingredi in illam requiem.*—Hebr. iv.

#### HYMN.

Iste Confessor Domini\* colentes

We should apply to this Hymn the rule of the Imita-

\* It is generally thought that this hymn was composed in honour of S. Martin of Tours, the first or one of the first honoured by the Church as Confessor. It is to this fact that the last Antiphon of his Office alludes, "O sanctissima anima, quam etsi gladius persecutoris non abstulit, palmam tamen martyrii non amisit."—Cf. Ben. XIV. *De Canoniz. SS. i. 5.*

Quem pie laudant populi per  
orbem  
Hac die lætus meruit beatas  
Scandere sedes.\*

Qui pius, prudens, humilis  
pudicus  
Sobriam duxit sine labe  
vitam  
Donec humanos animavit  
auræ  
Spiritus artus.

Cujus ob præstans meritum  
frequenter  
Ægra quæ passim jacuere  
membra  
Viribus morbi domitis saluti  
Restituuntur, etc.

tion: *Eo spiritu debet legi qua facta est. Si vis profectum haurire, lege humiliter, simpliciter et fideliter.* "The essential merit of all prayer is simplicity. It requires neither art nor wit, and the most simple succeed in it better than the most learned."†

A strophe rather inelegant in a classical point of view, but of touching beauty to a soul captivated by christian virtues and able to read between the lines: *In verbis verum amare non verba*, S. Augustine! "It was only necessary to pronounce the word virgin or virginity before Agnes to fill her heart with joy."—*Life of the Ven. Agnes de Jesus*, l. v.

The Church does not hesitate to claim for Her saints the honour of miracles. She knows that the glory of God and the piety of the faithful are here concerned; and that no more sensible proof of Her holiness in morals and purity of Her doctrine can be offered to simple souls. *Signa autem eos*

\* When the feast of a saint is not celebrated on the day of his death *in die natali*, these two lines are changed that this peculiarity may be noticed from the commencement of the Office.

† *Memoire du chapitre de Lyon*, 1776.

*qui crediderint hæc sequentur,*  
 Marc. xvi. *Euntes renuntiate*  
*quia cæci vident claudi ambu-*  
*lant leprosi mundantur, surdi*  
*audiunt.*—Luc. vii. See S.  
 Aug. in *Natali SS. Mart.*  
*Protasii et Gervasii, et Epist.*  
*xlix.*

## FIRST NOCTURN.

### *Psalm I.*

This is the first psalm of the Psalter, and it acts as a preface to all the others. In it Our Lord exhorts His members to holiness by the thought that true happiness is found only in virtue and that all the blessings of heaven are assured to the souls of the just. The Church places it at the beginning of the Office, and requires Her ministers to repeat it almost daily in order that they may become penetrated with the instruction it contains.\*

1. *Beatus vir qui non abiit*  
*in concilio impiorum, et in*  
*via peccatorum non stetit, et*  
*in cathedra pestilentiae non*  
*sedit.*

1. This verse announces the subject of the psalm. It is excellently applicable to Our Lord, the model of the just and source of all justice.—S. Aug., *Beatus*. Virtue does not only prepare us for bliss, it makes us happy

\* We do not indicate the Antiphons, because they are not the same for simple confessors and for Pontiffs. The one and the other presupposes this principle—that the saints having lived the life of Our Lord—having imitated His example and practised His virtues, we are warranted in attributing His sentiments to them, and that they deserve to have a share in His praises. It is a consequence resulting from the principle laid down in the Invitatory that Jesus Christ is the King of Confessors, in other words, that He is the head of the Church and that the saints are His members.

even whilst here below. *Non abiit, non stetit; non sedit.* Remark the progress of vice—we allow ourselves to be corrupted, become accustomed to it, and lastly, we corrupt others.—Bossuet.

2. Sed in lege Domine voluntas ejus et in lege Ejus meditabitur die ac nocte.

2. *Deus meus volui*, said our Saviour; *et legem Tuam in medio cordis mei!* In order to resemble Him we should be attached to the law of God; and, to this end we should meditate upon it. *Non potest, fieri ut habeat mala facta qui bonas habet cogitationes.*—S. Aug.

3. Et erit tanquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo.\*

3. *Arbor bona fructus bonos facit.*—Matt. vii. What fruits of virtue did not the soul of our dear Lord produce, united as it was to the Godhead! In the same manner, in proportion, is it with the saints united to the Lord by grace: *Qui manet in Me, hic fert fructum multum.*—John v. *In tempore suo*: The season of the just is the day of judgment: *Tempus omnis rei tunc erit.*—Eccle. iii.

Et folium ejus non defluet

*Non defluet*: The just man is

\* Ruffinus relates that a great sinner having retired into the desert to do penance passed a considerable time in meditating upon these three verses of the Psalter—the only words he had learnt out of the Sacred Scriptures: “Quo sibi sufficere dixit ad viam salutis et scientiam pietatis”.—*De Vitis Patrum*, I. ii., c. ix.

et omnia quæcumque faciet  
prosperabuntur.

4. Non sic impii, non sic ;  
sed tanquam pulvis quem  
projicit ventus a facie terræ.

5. Ideo non resurgent im-  
pii in judicio neque pecca-  
tores in consilio justorum.

6. Quoniam novit Domi-  
nus viam justorum et iter  
impiorum peribit.

always just ; in trials as in ad-  
versity, like to an evergreen  
tree : *Justus ut palma*.—Ps.  
xci.

4. Nothing can restrain the  
soul that is not true to God.  
Carried away by its passions  
like dust before the wind she  
will at last be snatched away  
by death and cast into the  
abyss.

5. They cannot be said to  
live again, and share in the  
resurrection, who are forever  
driven from the society of Jesus  
Christ and His saints.

6. Ultimate reason of all  
that which has gone before :  
*Novit Dominus qui sunt ejus*.—  
II. Tim. ii. Happy those whom  
Jesus regards with a gracious  
eye ! Woe to them who oblige  
Him to turn away His coun-  
tenance from them.

### *Psalm II.*

Our Lord glorifies His Father for the empire which  
He has received from Him over all the powers of the  
earth. His elect partake of His glory and share in His  
thanksgiving.

1. Quare fremuerunt gentes  
et populi meditati sunt in-  
ania.

1. Quoted by S. Peter, Acts  
iv.—God in His instruments,  
even in the feeblest, is stronger

2. Astiterunt reges terræ et principes convenerunt in unum adversus Dominum et adversus Christum Ejus.

3. Dirumpamus vincula eorum et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum.

4. Qui habitat in Cœlis irridebit eos et Dominus subsannabit eos.

5. Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira sua et in furore suo conturbabit eos.

6. Ego autem constitutus sum Rex ab Eo super Sion montem sanctum Ejus, prædicans præceptum Ejus.

than the world: *Quod infirmum est Dei fortius est hominibus.*—I. Cor. i.

2. *Reges terræ*: Power inspires pride and pride would dominate over everything; but the greatest monarchs possess power only on earth. *Tu rex gloriæ Christe!*

3. Fearful language; language of every sinner: *Nolumus hunc regnare super nos!*—Luc. xix. But, vain desires, they may shake their chains but cannot break them; they have only to choose between the yoke that is sweet and that which is severely just.

4. *Cælum sursum et terra deorsum.*—Prov. xxv. To confound His enemies God needs no effort; He has but to deliver them up to their own folly.

5. A word of His suffices to strike down the haughtiest: *Vox Domini confringentis cedros.*—Ps. xxviii.

6. Mission and power of Jesus Christ in the Church. This He imparts to whom He wills: *Nec quisquam sumit sibi.*—Hebr. v. Sion is the Church, the mountain, the city, the temple of God: *Accessistis ad Sion montem et civitatem Dei*



*viventis, ecclesiam primitivorum et Testamenti novi mediatorem Jesum.*—Hebr. xii.

7. Dominus dixit ad Me ; Filius meus es Tu, Ego hodie genui Te.

8. Postula a me et dabo Tibi gentes hereditatem Tuam et possessionem Tuam terminos terræ.

9. Reges eos in virga ferrea et tanquam vas figuli confringes eos.

10. Et nunc Reges intelligite ; erudimini qui iudicatis terram.

11. Servite Domino in timore, et exultate Ei cum tremore.

12. Apprehendite disciplinam nequando irascatur Dominus et pereatis de via justa.

7. A verse applied to Our Lord.—Acts xiii. and Hebr. i. The royalty of Jesus Christ is based upon His Holiness.

8. Vastness of the empire of Christ. All nations belong to Him ; may they all submit to Him !

9. He has power to punish as well as authority to command. Whoever revolts against Him shall be broken in the day of His wrath. *Tanquam vas.* Cf. Jude vii.

10. How many men are there wise in worldly affairs and blind in the things of God ? Why do they not open their eyes to the truth ?

11. Joy and trembling—fear and confidence ; two necessary things and which must not be separated in the service of God. *His duobus brachiis Deus comprehenditur.*—S. Bernard.

12. *Disciplinam : doctrinam Christi* quæ penitentiam suadet.—Nequando. We are always in danger of being lost. We should always fear and aspire to heaven.

13. Cum exarserit in brevi ira ejus; beati omnes qui confidunt in Eo.

13. Always also are we warranted in putting our trust in God; but confidence cannot subsist without submission and love.

### *Psalm III.*

Our Saviour expresses to His Father the trust He had always placed in Him in His tribulations, and in those of His members. He blesses Him for His Grace in this world and for His Glory in the next.

1. Domine quid multiplicati sunt qui tribulant me? Multi insurgunt adversum me.

1. Happy the man to whom the sight of danger recalls the thought of God. In multiplying their attacks his enemies only multiply his victories.

2. Multi dicunt animæ meæ: Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus.

2. Hope is the support of the just: *Quam sicut anchoram habemus.*—Heb. vi. This is what the evil one seeks above all things to take from us.

3. Tu autem, Domine, susceptor meus es, gloria mea et exaltans caput meum.

3. *Tu susceptor meus! Proximus gladio, proximus Deo.*—S. Ignat. God raises up and glorifies His saints as He raised up and glorified His Son.

4. Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi et exaudivit me de monte sancto Suo.

4. There is nothing sweeter to the soul than the thought of a prayer that has been heard. What a joy will it be when we shall see in heaven all the graces we shall have obtained!

5. Ego dormivi et sopora-

5. This may be understood

tus sum et exsurrexi quia  
Dominus suscepit me.

of the repose of night or of death. *I have slept in peace and have returned to my labour under the protection of God.* Or —*Death for me has been but a sleep; God hath drawn me forth from the tomb; words accomplished in Our Lord and which will be fulfilled likewise in us.*

6. Non timebo millia populi  
circumdantis me; exurge,  
Domine, salvum me fac,  
Deus meus.

6. When God is with us we have nothing to fear; but we can only rely upon His help when we ask for it.

7. Quoniam Tu percussisti  
omnes adversantes mihi sine  
causa: dentes peccatorum  
contrivisti.

7. The prosperity of the wicked is but for a time; the triumph of the just is sure and lasting.

8. Domini est salus et  
super populum tuum bene-  
dictio Tua.

8. The saints give homage to God for their merits and it is from Him alone they look for their crown—*Super populum Tuum. . . . Nos autem populus Ejus.*—Ps. xciv.

#### ABSOLUTION.

Exaudi, Domine Jesu  
Christe, preces servorum  
Tuorum et miserere nobis,  
Qui cum Patre et Spiritu  
Sancto, &c.

A prayer for grace to purify the soul from every stain, to deliver it from every bond, and to put it in a state to follow without resistance the will of God. Like the *Munda cor* at Mass.

## BLESSINGS.

Ÿ. Jube \* Domne † benedicere.

*Benedicere : benedici. Nemo nisi missus aut permissus officium prædicandi usurpare debet : quomodo enim prædicabunt nisi mittantur.*—Rup. i. 12. Some understand it thus : Command that we speak good words or holy words ; or, That we may say properly—*benedicere*. ‡

1. Benedictione perpetua benedicat nos Pater Æternus.

1. *Pater Æternus.* It is God not man Who blesses.—*Nos.* We all have equally the want of grace —*Perpetua.* The Church desires for us chiefly everlasting blessings.

2. Unigenitus Dei Filius nos benedicere et adjuvare dignetur.

2. *Observandum ut veniat Agnus et tribu Juda et Ipse accipiens librum signatum, dignetur aperire. Ipse est enim qui scripturas aperiens accendit corda discipulorum ita ut dicant : Nonne cor nostrum erat ardens intra nos ?* Oriz. *de Velo Moysis.*

\* *Cf. Matth. xiv. 28 : Jube me ad te venire.*

† *Cœlestem Dominum terrestrem dicito Dominum.* A custom of the Church since the 5th century. Baron. an. 416, No. 23. *Lecturus magnæ humilitatis gratia, non a Sacerdote sed ab Eo cui sacerdos usserit se postulat benedici. Sacerdos autem ut tantæ humilitatis vicum reddat non subjecto cuiquam benedicendi delegat officium, non per semetipsum benedictionem dare præsumit sed potius ut a Deo Qui est super omnia benedictus prærogetur, exposcit.* Pet. Damien.

‡ This formula was already long in use in the Church of Milan in the time of S. Ambrose. Sleep having overtaken on one occasion this holy bishop during the singing of the lessons it was necessary to arouse him by these words —*Jubeat Dominus lectori lectionem legere.* S. Greg., *Tarde Mirac. nart. i. 5.*

3. Spiritus Sancti gratia illuminet sensus et corda nostra.

*In fine lectionum :* Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis.

*Respondetur :* Deo gratias.

3. The grace of God enlightens and quickens us at the same time. We should ask for it in union with the apostles and sacred writers.

A sentiment of humility naturally inspired at the sight of a perfection from which we acknowledge ourselves to be far distant. *Peccatori dixit Deus : Quare tu enarrat justitiam meam ?*—Ps. xlix.

A testimony of thanksgiving either for the instruction we have received or for the grace we have just asked for and which we look upon as granted. —Rupert, i. 14.

## SECOND NOCTURN.

### *Psalm IV.*

Jesus Christ rejoices with His saints because He has God for His portion and support.

1. Cum invocarem exaudivit me Deus justitiæ meæ ; in tribulatione dilatasti mihi.

2. Miserere mei et exaudi orationem meam.

1. *Justitiæ meæ : cujus gratia justificatus sum. Dilatasti* here understood *angusta*. Such is the life of the Saints : *Clamaverunt et Dominus exaudivit eos.* —Ps. xxxiii.

Graces obtained in the past do not preserve us from want in the future : but they increase our confidence.

3. Filii hominum usquequo gravi<sup>us</sup> corde? Ut quid diligitis vanitatem et quæritis mendacium?

4. Et scitote quoniam mirificavit Dominus sanctum suum: Dominus exaudiet me cum clamavero ad Eum.

5. Irascimini et nolite peccare: quæ dicitis in cordibus vestris, in cubilibus vestris compungimini.

6. Sacrificate sacrificium justitiæ et sperate in Domino; multi dicunt: Quis ostendit nobis bona?

7. Signatum est super nos lumen vultus Tui, Domine; dedisti lætitiā in corde meo.

8. A fructu frumenti, vini

3. For those who are taught of God the folly of the world is a mystery and pain. *Vae tibi flumen moris humani!* cried out S. Augustine after his conversion: *quousque non siccaberis?* —*Queritis mendacium*: generally those are deceived who seek to be so.

4. Is not the power and glory of Jesus Christ the Saint of saints, the foundation of all our confidence?

5. *Irascimini*: That is to say, be indignant against evil in order to preserve yourselves and others from it. *Melius est si irasceris et corrigis, quam si, non irascendo, interire permittis.* —S. Aug.

6. To offer a sacrifice of Justice is to pay to God by penance what we owe Him for our sins—*Quis ostendit?* All seek for happiness; but those only find it who seek it in God. *Regnum Dei in se cæteri non vident.*—S. Aug.

7. The soul finds her peace in her union with God through knowledge and love: *Adimplebis me lætitiā cum vultu tuo.*—Ps. xv.

8. *Multiplicati sunt* add *pec-*



et olei sui, multiplicati sunt.

9. In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam.

10. Quoniam Tu, Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me.

*catores.* They place their happiness in earthly things—and God abandons them to their desires and lust. *Beatus populus cujus Dominus Deus ejus.*—Ps. cxlxiii.

9. *In idipsum, simul.* God is the sole rest of the saints in life and in death—*Dormiam*: Death for the Just is but a short sleep.

10. When God is the only object of our hope He becomes the source of our peace.

### *Psalm V.*

Our Lord asks of His Father the salvation of all His members; He shows us on what conditions we may enter heaven.

1. Verba mea auribus percipe, Domine; intellige clamorem meum.

2. Intende voci orationis meæ, Rex meus et Deus meus.

1. *Christus in diebus carnis Sæ preces cum clamore valido et lacrymis offerens exauditus est.*—Hebr. v. *Apud Deum alte clamat humilitas. Oratio enim humiliantis se nubes penetrabit.*—Humb. *de Erudit. relig.*, iv. 11.

2. We ask of God that He would listen to our prayers; are we attentive in them? *Rex*: To pray to God with humility we should think of His Majesty, and of our own nothingness.

3. Quoniam ad Te orabo, Domine, mane exaudies vocem meam.

4. Mane astabo tibi; et videbo quoniam non Deus volens iniquitatem Tu es.

5. Neque habitabit juxta Te malignus, neque permanebunt in iusti ante oculos Tuos.

6. Odisti omnes qui operantur iniquitatem: perdes omnes qui loquuntur mendacium.

7. Virum sanguinum et dolosum abominabitur Dominus: ego autem in multitudine misericordiæ Tuæ.

8. Introibo in domum Tuam, adorabo ad templum sanctum Tuum in timore Tuo.

3. *Ad te*: it is God we must invoke; not men — *Quoniam orabo, exaudies*: Our help is in prayer — *Mane*, promptly, soon. A thousand years in the sight of God are but a day, and the life of man but as its dawn.

4. When the day of eternity shall arrive God will appear in all His holiness and justice.

5. Light casteth out darkness, and stainlessness driveth away sin. Let us respect the holiness of God in His temples and in ourselves.

6. Deceit and sin: two evils equally opposed to the nature of God, but almost inseparable in man, the one being the excuse or the consequence of the other.—*Qui loquuntur* . . . they who propagate the illusions and prejudices of the world.

7. *Virum sanguinum*: the earthly and depraved man—the man of flesh and blood, *ex sanguinibus*, such as is born of sinful Adam — having all his corrupt inclinations.

8. Words uttered by S. Louis when dying. The true temple of God, His indestructible sanctuary, is heaven, where His

saints contemplate Him and adore Him. Our churches are its images : *Umbra futurorum.*—Heb. x.

9. Domine, deduc me in justitia Tua : propter inimicos meos dirige in conspectu Tuo viam meam.

10. Quoniam non est in ore eorum veritas : cor eorum vanum est.

11. Sepulcrum patens est guttur eorum ; linguis suis dolose agebant : judica illos, Deus.

12. Decidant a cogitationibus suis ; secundum multitudinem impietatum eorum expelle eos, quoniam irritaverunt Te, Domine.

13. Et lætentur in Te omnes qui sperant in Te ; in æternum exaltabunt et habitabis in eis.

14. Et gloriabuntur in Te omnes qui diligunt nomen Tuum ; quoniam Tu benedices justo.

9. There are so many bad and deceitful paths that they whom the light of God illumines and guides are alone truly happy.

10. *Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur.*—Matth. xii. The maxims of worldlings are as false as their affections are vain.

11. A perverse heart is a hot-bed of corruption ; is it not desirable that God should afflict it in order to purify it and to remedy the scandal ?

12. Sooner or later the wicked shall be destroyed ; and God, displeased with their sins, will drive them from His face and exclude them from His kingdom.

13. On the other hand the hope of the just shall be accomplished : *Audiivi vocem magnam de throno dicentem. Ecce tabernaculum Dei cum hominibus, et habitabit cum eis.*—Apoc. xxi.

14. The just man is Jesus Christ, but all who partake of His holiness participate in His blessings.

15. Domine, ut scuto bonæ voluntatis tuæ coronasti nos.

15. It is by the grace and favour of God that the saints gain their merit and its reward.

*Psalm VIII.*

Our Lord thanks the Father for the glory with which He clothes Him in His own person, and in that of His saints.

1. Domine Dominus noster quam admirabile est nomen Tuum in universa terra !

1. Everything on earth speaks to us of God, but very few understand this language. The book of nature is a riddle to the greater number.—S. Aug., *Conf. x. vi.*

2. Quoniam elevata est magnificentia Tua super cœlos.

2. Though the heavens teach us less clearly than the Gospel, it does not follow that they are dumb or that we should shut our ears to their teaching. *Levate in excelsum oculos vestros et videte qui creavit hæc. Quanto his dominator eorum speciosior est !*—Is. xi., Sap. xiii.

3. Ex ore infantium et lactentium perfecisti laudem, propter inimicos Tuos ; ut destruas inimicum et ultorem.

3. Men are but as babes in comparison with angels. How can God find glory in the praise of such lowly creatures ? *Confiteor Tibi Pater quia abscondisti hæc a sapientibus et prudentibus et revelas ea parvulis !*—Matth. xi.

4. Quoniam videbo cœlos Tuos, opera digitorum Tuo-

4. It is thus we should regard all things as the works of

rum, lunam et stellas quæ Tu fundasti.

5. Quid est homo quod memor es ejus aut filius hominis quoniam visitas eum ?

6. Minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis : gloria et honore coronasti eum et constituisti eum super opera manuum Tuarum.

7. Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus Ejus ; oves et boves universas, insuper et pecora campi.

8. Volucres cœli et pisces maris qui perambulant semitas maris.

God. *Opera digitorum Tuorum* — *Videbo cœlos, lunam et stellas* : a thought well placed in the Office of the Night.

5. Man is only an insignificant part of this world ; but, his soul gifted with knowledge and love has obtained—among all creatures—the privilege of receiving and possessing his God.

6. Inferior to the angels by nature, and placed beneath them for a while even in the person of its Divine Head, the human race has been raised for ever above every creature through the merits of this Incarnate Word who deigns now to associate man with all His greatness.

7. In Jesus Christ, the new Adam, these words are strictly verified : for His members have no rights but what come through Him : *Omnia Mihi tradita sunt Patre Meo.*—Luc. x.

8. *Omnia vestra sunt, vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei.*—I. Cor. iii. Let us then belong to Jesus Christ ; everything will serve to raise us to God as it raised Him, and will help us to procure His glory.

9. Domine, Dominus noster, quam admirabile est nomen Tuum in universa terra.

9. The more we know God the more we must admire Him; the more we praise Him the more we find Him to be above all praise.—Eccli. xliii.

### THIRD NOCTURN.

#### *Psalm XIV.*

Our Lord proclaims to the glory of His Father the conditions on which He has entered heaven, and by what way the saints attain to it.

1. Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo Tuo aut quis requiescet in monte sancto Tuo?

2. Qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur justitiam.

3. Qui loquitur veritatem in corde suo qui non egit dolum in lingua sua.

4. Nec fecit proximo suo malum; et opprobrium non accepit adversus proximos suos.

1. Heaven is our Home: are we on the path to it? The Church, above all, the Sanctuary is an image of it: do we resemble the blessed and the angels?

2. Therein lies all perfection: *Declina a malo et fac bonum.*—Ps. xxxvi. *Talis decebat ut nobis esset Pontifex.*—Hebr. vii.

3. *In corde.* Virtue in appearance does not suffice: we must practise sincerely and completely the double precept of charity: *Non omnis qui dicit: Domine, Domine, sed qui facit voluntatem Patris.*—Matth. vii.

4. The necessity and extent of Charity. It is not sufficient to refrain from slander, we must shut our ears against it.



5. Ad nihilum deductus est in conspectu ejus malignus: timentes autem Dominum glorificat.

6. Qui jurat proximo suo et non decipit, qui pecuniam suam non dedit ad usuram, et munera super innocentem non accepit.

7. Qui facit hæc, non movebitur in æternum.

5. How few there are who never esteem anything else but virtue, and who give constantly their praises only in proportion to merit!

6. The Psalmist only promises heaven to works of charity as Our Lord does in the sentence of the day of Judgment; for we could not love our neighbour perfectly without loving God.

7. At the last day the wicked shall fall to rise no more; the just shall be for ever confirmed in grace and virtue.

### *Psalm XX.*

Our Lord and His saints give thanks to God for that special providence of which they have been the object.

1. Domine in virtute Tua lætabitur Rex, et super salutare Tuum exaltabit vehementer.

2. Desiderium cordis ejus tribuisti ei et voluntate labionem ejus non fraudasti eum.

3. Quoniam prævenisti

1. *Rex: Tu Rex gloriæ, Christe! — Lætabitur.* Would that like Him we could taste the joy of the Lord—that joy of which God is the principle, and which longs for His triumph over all hearts.

2. *Desiderium.* It is desire which is the soul of prayer; the lips are only listened to in proportion as they express the sentiments of the heart.

3. *Prævenisti.* The merits

eum in benedictionibus dulcedinis; posuisti in capite ejus coronam de lapide pretioso.

4. Vitam petiit a Te et tribuisti ei longitudinem dierum in sæculum sæculi.

5. Magna est gloria ejus in salutari Tuo: gloriam et magnum decorem impones super eum.

6. Quoniam dabis eum in benedictionem in sæculum sæculi; lætificabis eum in gaudio cum vultu Tuo.

7. Quoniam Rex sperat in Domino, et in misericordia Altissimi non commovebitur.

8. Inveniatur manus Tua omnibus inimicis Tuis; dextera Tua inveniat omnes qui Te oderunt.

9. Pones eos ut clibanum

of the saints come from the goodness of God; and in crowning them it is His work that He crowns. The Saint of saints Himself possesses nothing, as man, but what He has received from the Father.

4. *Vitam et longitudinem dierum.* Our Lord has asked for Himself, as well as for His members, eternal life: Let us ask for nothing else: *Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram.*—Ps. xxvi.

5. We should thank God for the glory which He has bestowed upon Jesus Christ and His elect. Can such honour be purchased too dearly?

6. *Dabis in benedictionem: facies ut benedicatur—Lætificabis eum vultu Tuo.* All happiness proceeds from the clear vision of God.

7. Those who trust in the promises of God and upon His Mercy are immovable: they remain ever the same.

8. None can escape the hand of God.—It is a grace which He gives to the sinner when He checks him in the disorders of his way.

9. *In tempore vultus.* . . .

ignis in tempore vultus Tui;  
Dominus in ira Sua contur-  
babit eos, et devorabit eos  
ignis.

10. Fructum eorum de  
terra perdes; et semen  
eorum a filiis hominum.

11. Quoniam declinave-  
runt in Te mala, cogitaverunt  
consilia quæ non potuerunt  
stabilire.

12. Quoniam pones eos  
dorsum: in reliquiis Tuis  
præparabis vultum eorum.

13. Exaltare, Domine, in  
virtute Tua; cantabimus et  
psallemus virtutes Tuas.

*In ira sua*: Then the time of  
mercy shall have ceased. Oh  
that sinners had some foresight!  
*Descendant in infernum viven-  
tes, ne descendant morientes.*—  
S. Bern.

10. What visible chastise-  
ments upon those who have  
openly braved the justice of  
God!

11. Sinners cannot injure  
truly faithful souls—Treatise of  
S. Chrysostom: *Quod nemo  
cuiquam nocere possit nisi ipse.*

12. God resists to their face  
those who become the enemies  
of Jesus Christ and of His  
saints. *In reliquiis tuis.* . . .  
A certain number will survive  
Thy chastisements; but Thou  
wilt force them to take flight.

13. When we love the Lord  
we rejoice in His perfections;  
and can never sufficiently praise  
Him.

### *Psalm XXIII.*

Sentiments of Our Lord and of His saints on their  
entry into heaven. This psalm is sung at the giving of  
the First Tonsure, because the sanctuary is the image of  
heaven and ecclesiastics are the elect of this world.

1. Domini est terra et  
plenitudo Ejus, orbis terra-

1. The dominion of God is  
infinite, and all belongs to

rum et universi qui habitant in eo.

2. Quid Ipse super maria fundavit eum, et super flumina præparavit eum.

3. Quis ascendet in montem Domini, aut quis stabit in loco sancto Ejus?

4. Innocens manibus et mundo corde, qui non accepit in vano animam suam, nec juravit in dolo proximo suo.

5. Hic accipiet benedictionem a Domino et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo.

6. Hæc est generatio quærentium Dominum; quærentium faciem Dei Jacob.

Him. Everything is subject to Him, because He made all things and sustains them by His word.

2. He hath established the world upon nothing, the earth above the waters, and the Church upon the opposition of the world and of hell.—S. Chryst., *Hom. ant. exil.*

3. Heaven, the Church, the temple of God are all as if on the top of a mountain; no one can reach them without ascending nor ascend without using effort.

4. *Innocens*: in other words, Jesus Christ alone, and those of His members who share in His sanctity: a subject of reflection for the ministers of the altar—*Qui non accepit in vano: ut vana pertractet.*

5. Since we can have but an innocence which has been renewed, we need pardon as well as grace: our Divine Lord has merited for us both.

6. Happy the man who seeks the Lord, if he seek Him purely and sincerely! *Qui quærit, invenit.*—Matth. vii. *Hæc est generatio*: Ecclesiastics: *Qui non ex sanguinibus*, etc.—John i.

7. Attollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini portæ æternales, et introibit Rex Gloriæ.

8. Quis est iste Rex Gloriæ? Dominus Fortis et Potens, Dominus Potens in prælio.

9. Attollite portas principes vestras et elevamini portæ æternales, et introibit Rex Gloriæ.

10. Quis est iste Rex Gloriæ? Dominus virtutum, Ipse est Rex Gloriæ.

7. Jesus Christ, the King of Glory by nature, merited heaven by His own right and not by a borrowed one. The saints enter it as His members in virtue of the merits which He communicates to them. *Consedere facit.*—Ephes. ii.

8. It was at the price of His Blood that the Son of God entered into heaven: *Per proprium sanguinem.*—Hebr. ix. Can we expect to enter there if we are cowardly and slothful?

9. May many Christians enter heaven, following their Head, and partaking of His happiness! *Principes: Deo servire regnare est.*

10. O Saviour! Thou alone art the King of Glory and Lord of Hosts. *Tu Rex Gloriæ . . . Tu solus Sanctus!* Thy saints have triumphed by Thy help; it is Thou Who triumphest and Who reignest in them.

#### THE CONCLUDING HYMN.

##### *Te Deum Laudamus.\**

\* "The *Te Deum* is not in metre properly so-called; it is composed of verse lines without any fixed measure. But if it is without the regular harmony of Virgil and Horace it has another which consists in the fitness and exact relation in the words, in their sound and in measure with the ideas they express. Who can misunderstand this kind of harmony in these grave and

This hymn is composed of two nearly equal parts : 1. The first is addressed to the ever Blessed Trinity Whose essential perfections are first of all praised, and Whose adorable Persons are next distinguished. 2. The second part has for its object God the Son. After having adored Him in His twofold nature, and having celebrated His chief mysteries, the Incarnation, Redemption and the future Judgment, we beseech Him to watch over His Church and to conduct to heaven the souls that believe in Him.

1. Te Deum laudamus, Te  
Dominum confitemur.

Te æternum Patrem omnis  
terra veneratur.

1. *Hæc calamo cordis scripta  
sunt, voce cordis recitentur.  
Cave ne mendacia proferas dum  
ea recitas.*—Devie, *Mémorial*.

*Patrem.* Without distinction nor exclusion of any person as in the Lord's prayer. *Pater noster.*—*Omnis terra : Terra et plenitudo ejus.*—Ps. xxiii. We should unite with the Church ever adoring God throughout the world.

solemn terminations of the verses. *Omnis terra veneratur.* . . . *Universæ Potestates ?* What a grand effect the mingling of the rapid iambic with the grave spondee produces in that wonderful picture of the celestial choir, of apostles, prophets, and martyrs, singing in concert with the Church on earth the glory of the Eternal Father: *Te gloriosus apostolorum chorus ; Te martyrum candidatus.* . . . *Te per orbem terrarum.* . . . And, after this magnificent enumeration of every thing that pays homage to the majesty of God, do we not see as it were that immense Majesty Itself appear in this verse, three-worded only, but composed of long syllables: *Patrem immensæ Majestatis ?* These are not the regular forms of Latin poetry ; but they are the freer forms of the Hebrew verse of the poetry of David and of Isaias ; such as still remains in the Septuagint and even in the Vulgate."—Mgr. Cousseau, *Memoirs ser le Te Deum*.



Tibi omnes Angeli, Tibi  
cœli et universæ Potestates.

Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim  
incessabili voce proclamant.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.\*

Pleni sunt cœli et terra  
majestatis gloriæ Tuæ.

Te, gloriosus apostolorum  
chorus.

*Angeli.* The blessed spirits  
in general. *Decies millies cen-*  
*tem millia.*—Dan. vii. *Cœli*  
*Throni. Cælum mihi sedes.*—  
Act. vii.

Among the celestial hierarchy  
are mentioned those most ex-  
alted in wisdom and charity.  
Allusion to the vision of Isaias:  
*Vidi Dominum sedentem super*  
*solium. Seraphim clamabant*  
*alter ad alterum.*—Sanctus vi.

*Sabaoth exercituum.* The  
more God shows Himself the  
more He inspires reverence  
and holy fear. Let us enter  
into the sentiments of the  
Angels in presence of His  
infinite Majesty.—Apoc. iv.

All things are full of His  
glory: in the sense that every  
thing expresses and manifests  
His perfections; in this sense  
also—that His Majesty is vene-  
rated or at least acknowledged  
in every part of the creation.

After Angels—men. First  
those who are in heaven, and

\* “What words!” cried out S. Mary of the Incarnation, repeating this  
verse before her sisters, “what depth!” And in the ecstasy of her soul she  
never tired of saying to herself: *Incessabili voce proclamant: Sanctus!*  
*Sanctus! Sanctus!*—Mgr. Dupanloup, *Vie de la sainte, t. iii., iv.* F.  
Condren appearing to M. Mester after his death said likewise these words  
to him:—*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus! How holy is God! How holy is God!*  
. . . M. Olier, *Memoires.*

Te, prophetarum laudabilis  
numerus.

Te, martyrum candidatus  
laudat exercitus.

Te, per orbem terrarum  
sancta confitetur Ecclesia.

Patrem immensæ Majes-  
tatis.

Venerandum Tuum verum  
et unicum Filium.

Sanctum quoque Paracli-  
tum Spiritum.

2. Tu rex gloriæ, Christe,  
Tu Patris sempiternus es Fi-  
lius.

in the front rank, the apostles  
who communicated to others  
the grace of the Saviour: *Apos-  
toli, gloria Christi*.—II. Cor. viii.

*Prophetarum*: Prophets in  
the widest sense: all whom  
God has made use of to en-  
lighten their brethren in a su-  
pernatural manner.

The martyrs follow the Apos-  
tles. They would precede them  
if the apostles had not been also  
martyrs, the testimony of blood  
being the most glorious of all.  
*Candidatus*; *Hi sunt qui vene-  
runt de tribulatione magna et  
laverunt stolas suas in Sanguine  
Agni*.—Apoc. vii.

The Church on earth forms  
one Body with that of heaven;  
both have the same spirit.

Three divine words—the  
most august that any language  
can utter; with what majesty  
does the Church offer them to  
our adoration!

Here ends the invocation to  
the Holy Trinity.

2. Allusion to the Ps. xxiii.  
*Quis est iste Rex Gloriæ?* S.  
Thomas of Aquinas had a par-  
ticular devotion to these words.

He was accustomed to repeat them with the following verses between the consecration and communion of the masses he was attending.

Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem non horruisti Virginis uterum.

*Suscepturus hominem, seu naturam humanam individuum in unitate personæ ad liberandum hominem, seu genus humanum coarctari non horruisti, etc.* S. Peter Damian says that S. Odilon always bowed profoundly at these words.

Tu devicto mortis aculeo aperuisti credentibus regna cœlorum.

*Mortem nostram moriendo destruxit et vitam resurgendo reparavit.*—Præf. Ascens. Thanks to Our Lord, death raises us to heaven instead of casting us into the abyss.

Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes in gloria Patris.

Psalm cix.—*Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris Meis.*

Judex crederis esse venturus.

*Ibid.*—*Judicabit in Nationibus.* . . .

Te ergo quæsumus, Tuis famulis subveni quos pretioso Sanguine redemisti.

After the season of Mercy will come the time of Justice.

Supplication after praise—as in the Lord's Prayer; we should remember that in chanting the Office, the knee is bent at this passage:—*Quos redemisti!* The foundation of our hope. S. Camillus of Lellis expired repeating these words.

Æterna fac cum Sanctis  
Tuis in gloria numerari.\*

Salvum fac populum  
Tuum, Domine, et benedic  
hæreditati Tuæ. Et rege  
eos, et extolle illos usque  
in æternum.

Per singulos dies benedici-  
mus Te. Et laudamus No-  
men Tuum in sæculum sæ-  
culi.

Dignare, Domine, die isto  
sine peccato nos custodire.

Miserere nostri, Domine,  
miserere nostri.

Fiat misericordia Tua Do-  
mine, super nos, quemadmo-  
dum speravimus in Te.

In Te, Domine, speravi ;  
non confundar in æternum.†

*Nos* understood—or else *fa-  
mulos Tuos*. It is probable that  
originally the Hymn finished  
here.—Mgr. Cousseau.

If these last verses borrowed  
from various psalms have always  
formed part of the *Te Deum*  
it must be allowed that the  
author in composing it must  
have designed it for the eccle-  
siastical office. *Eos* for *famu-  
los Tuos* ; a syllepsis.

Psalm cxliv.—Such is the use  
that a priest should make of his  
strength and of his life.

End of Psalm cxx.—*Domi-  
nus custodit te, etc.* First offer-  
ing of the day—we should make  
it with all our heart.

Psalm cxxii.—In our misery  
we have no other resource than  
the mercy of God.

Conclusion of the Psalm  
xxxii. Hope and confidence,  
the fruits of every prayer.

Psalm xxx.—*Quid timetis, mo-  
dice fidei, ut peccata nolit remit-*

\* The Life of S. Auschairs, Archbishop of Hamburg, relates that being on  
his deathbed, 3rd Feb., 865, he caused the *Te Deum* to be sung for him to  
thank God for the graces He had poured upon him, and that the verses upon  
which he dwelt the longest were these:—*Judex crederis. . . . Te ergo.*  
. . . *Æterna fac, etc.*

† “ St. Michael-des-Saints received often in the Office extraordinary graces  
at Matins. A bright light darting from his countenance bore witness to the

*tere? Affinit ea cruci cum suis  
manibus.*—S. Bern.

joy with which his heart overflowed. Then he would become ravished and remain long in ecstasy in the sight of all present. It was ordinarily during the *Te Deum* that these ecstasies began, as though his heart all occupied with the praises of his God wished to unite itself to the choir of celestial spirits to repeat with them the eternal *Sanctus*."—*Life of the Saint*, by Louis de S. Jacques, a religious of the same order, l. ii., c. x., 12°.

## CHAPTER II.

### OF LAUDS.

#### § I.

MATINS and Lauds form together but one Hour ; they succeed each other ordinarily without any break and end by the same conclusion. Nevertheless, the passing from one of these parts to the other is marked by the repetition of the *Deus in Adjutorium*. It is the right moment to renew our fervour and it is useful to seek in the prayers themselves, and in the time of the day to which they refer, a subject of pious thoughts and holy considerations.

We have observed that the day is a likeness as well as an element of life. Lauds, designed to be recited immediately after midnight, expresses the sentiments of a soul that entered the world in the sight of God and of His Perfections. It should express therefore the mind of Our Lord at His Nativity, or at the opening of His glorious Life at the Resurrection. This is what we accordingly meet with especially in the Lauds of Sundays and festivals with which we are exclusively engaged : every part of them we find will suggest this thought.

Let us suppose Our Lord coming forth from the tomb after three days' burial, or leaving the bosom of His



Father—the difference is but small. In both of these mysteries Jesus Christ appears to us animated with the same sentiments towards the Divine Majesty—with gratitude for Its Goodness, with zeal for Its Glory; in a word, with all the dispositions which are expressed in this part of the Office. Perhaps however the thought of the Resurrection is more suitable to ecclesiastics, either because this mystery gives the idea of a wholly spiritual and heavenly life such as the life of priests should be here below, or because it recalls to mind the great facts that distinguished the foundation of the Church; the Mission of the Apostles, the Descent of the Holy Ghost and the Conversion of the world.

Including the canticle, the psalms of Lauds are eight in number—the number of the beatitudes—a symbol of the heavenly life; but some of these psalms uniting together in two groups, the sum of them is reduced to five. They are, say the commentators, like the five victims which God commanded the princes of His people to offer each day,\* or like the five lamps of the wise virgins which were lighted for the coming of the Bridegroom.† They recall also the Five Wounds of our Saviour, those fountains of the river of Life in which our senses are purified and from which our soul draws grace and salvation.‡ Let us then consider each Psalm in particular in order to observe its object and signification.

*Psalm XCXII. Dominus regnavit.*

The first is a psalm of praise inspired by the double wonder of the creation and of the conversion of the

\* Num. vii.

† Matth. xxv. 8.

‡ Is. xii. 3.

world. In a few sketches, as magnificent as they are rapid, the Psalmist sings the greatness of God, both Creator and Redeemer ; the Origin of the world founded like the Church upon chaos, and supported like Her by an all-powerful Hand, the Most High triumphing over every obstacle, and filling up every void ; the divine work, resplendent with all the riches and with all the perfections of its Author. Naturally, we represent to ourselves Jesus Christ, the High Priest, coming into the world as into His temple, and lending His voice to nature that it might fittingly glorify its Maker ; or else we contemplate Him returning to heaven after having founded His Church, the true and eternal sanctuary of the Supreme Majesty, and pouring forth from out of His Heart lively sentiments of joy, wonder, and thanks, for the marvels He has just wrought to the glory of His Father. Such ought to be the disposition of His ministers at the sight of the wonders of Divine Omnipotence and Love. What can there be sweeter for a priest than to offer thus to God, together with His Divine Head, his joyful praise and thanksgiving from the earliest hour of the day, whilst nature, coming forth from the shades of night, seems created anew.

*Psalm XCIX. Jubilate Deo.*

This second psalm is a more lively call to joy and gratitude. It is inspired by an ardent wish that men should feel what God has done for them and what return they owe Him for His loving kindness. In reciting it we may think of Jesus Risen and of His saints whose glory we are one day to share.

A pious ecclesiastic, whom a supernatural attraction kept habitually united to Our Lord, applied to the Wounds of this Divine Saviour these words of the fourth verse : *Introite portas Ejus* ; and the following words : *Atria Ejus in hymnis*, to the opening of His Heart that holy sanctuary, that source of so much love and of so many blessings.

*Ps. LXII., Deus meus ; and Ps. LXVI., Deus  
misereatur nostri.*

It is especially in the Ps. LXII. that Our Lord expresses the zeal with which He is on fire for His Father, His regret at being away from Him, His longing to re-enter into His glory and to remain eternally united to Him. The ecclesiastic who has taken the Lord for his portion and who puts heaven before everything, will find then in this psalm the expression of his most intimate sentiments. By sin he was separated from God like all his brethren ; he is reconciled to Him by grace ; he has entered the ranks of His friends and of His ministers. It now remains that he should be perfectly united to Him, to consume himself for His Glory. This should be the object of all his desires. In the meantime he should remember that he enjoys more perfectly than any one the object of his love, in a sanctuary of which he is the minister, and of which the Jewish tabernacle was but the shadow ; and it is to the Eucharist, and at the same time to heaven, that he should direct his every thought and affection.

The Psalm LXVI. : *Deus misereatur nostri*, which the Church joins with the preceding, is a prayer begging

God to spread more and more the light of Faith, and to make known to all people Him Who, being the Way, the Truth, and the Life, can alone conduct them to their true end : *Ut cognoscamus in terra viam Tuam.* . . .

In fact, the earth having brought forth the Blessed Fruit that was to be its salvation, having produced it in a twofold manner, by His Birth and by His Resurrection, what is there to wish for but that all men may know the grace that is given to them, and may enjoy the happiness prepared for them? Thus this psalm only develops the first petition of Jesus Christ to His Father :—*Sanctificetur Nomen Tuum.* It corresponds with the chief desire of the priest who only lives here to continue the work of Jesus Christ by making the Divine Majesty of God known and loved.

The connection of this psalm, which breathes so ardent a zeal for the salvation of souls, with the preceding, which is a simple burst of Divine Love, and their re-union under the same doxology recall an important truth. It is that the two charities should be reunited in our heart as in that of Our Lord, and that if either should fail in us we then represent but imperfectly the Word made Flesh : *Misit illos binos ante faciem suam.\**

*The Canticle, Benedicite, omnia opera Domini.*

After the first three psalms we always find a Canticle at Lauds, that is to say a song of joy, a solemn hymn taken from the Psalter and composed to return special thanks to God. The one recited on Sundays

\* *Luc. x. 1.*—*Pro Evangelistis*, Homil. S. Greg., lect. vii.

and Feast-days is one of the most remarkable on account of the event it recalls and for the sentiments it expresses.

We know to what time and to what historical event it refers.\* It was in the midst of the Babylonian furnace, as a thanksgiving for a most marvellous work of Divine Providence, in presence of Nabuchodonosor and his amazed court that this splendid canticle was sung for the first time. The three youths, delivered to the flames for their faithfulness to the Law of God, seeing themselves miraculously protected in the fiery furnace are struck with admiration at the sight of the goodness and power of God. In the enthusiasm that transports them they are unable to express or feel all the emotions of their hearts ; they address themselves to their brothers and to their fathers in the faith, to all the heavenly spirits, to every creature without exception, to all those beings, witnesses of their happiness, and dependent, like themselves, upon the Sovereign Master. They call these to their aid, they invoke them in the order of their creation as mentioned by Moses ; they would give to all of them one spirit and one heart to join them with their song of gratitude ; or rather, forgetting that they possess neither feelings nor will and supposing that the goodness of God is acknowledged everywhere as it ought to be, they exhort them to join in praising their common Creator. They press them thereto with an increasing ardour and tire not in the reiteration of their instances. As living monuments of the Divine Power and Goodness they want to employ all their life and strength in making His Supreme Majesty known, loved,

\* *Dan. iii.*



and served ; they regret they are unable to do in the world what the angels effect in nature.

Such doubtless were the sentiments of the first man when fresh from the hand of his Maker, carrying His image still intact in his soul, animated by His life, enlightened by His light, inflamed with His love, he contemplated for the first time this vast world as a divine temple of which he was to be the priest. He felt that all creatures coming like himself from God should live for God and refer to Him the use of all their powers. He wished that each of them should answer faithfully to the designs of its Author, that none should be diverted from its end by any disorderly affection, and that all, aiding and mutually exciting each other, should sing with one voice, to the glory of the Sovereign Being, this Canticle of Benedictions, which is always heard in heaven. Such also for more weighty cause, must have been the sentiments and the desires of the Son of God, the Saint of Saints, the High Priest, when He descended here below to renew the worship of His Father and restore to the Divine Majesty that glory of which Adam by his sin had robbed Him ; or, when having accomplished His sacrifice and sanctified the world anew by that most Adorable Blood which was never to cease to flow thereon, this Man-God reascended to His Father to share with Him a glory which was due to Them by so many claims from creatures twice endowed with a life without end, and re-established in all their rights to the heritage of heaven.

Accordingly the Church makes this Canticle the special portion of Her priests—the representatives of Her Redeemer. Not content with placing it on their lips



almost every day in the Hour of the Office that precedes the oblation of the Sacred Victim, She desires that in descending from the Altar they should again repeat its holy aspirations. Thereby She seems to tell them that in choosing them for His ministers, in asking them to renounce all in order to serve Him, God has not shown to them less love than He did to those Israelites who glorified His name in the midst of the fire; that in preserving their souls from the impiety and corruption of the world He has given a greater grace to them than if He preserved their bodies from the fury of the flames;\* that the Angel of the Lord who descended into the furnace and diffused a cooling dew from heaven therein was but a figure of that Son of God Who places Himself in their hands and pours into their hearts His very Blood; that so the love of Him, and zeal for His glory, should burn with more ardour upon the altar of their soul. Called to spread abroad the reign of God they should strive to increase the number and fervour of His adorers; that drawing the priestly spirit from the Blood of the Lamb—their daily food—one of their greatest desires would be to gain all hearts for Jesus Christ, to animate, as it were, every creature so that all things tending towards God, with them and after their fashion, they should all glorify God with one same impulse and common voice. And in the same way, when the Church requires them to repeat this Canticle at the first hour of the day, She gives them to understand that it is especially at that moment and in that duty that they have to praise God for the whole world; and by teaching them to regard themselves as the heart and

\* S. Chryst. *de Sacerd.*, iii. 14.

soul of every creature, She exhorts them to pay, in the name of all, to the Divine Majesty that debt of adoration from which no one is dispensed.

After this, let no one be surprised at the fervent language of the inspired volume ; let no one ask how they can exhort insensible and dumb creatures to bless the Lord. Such words require no justification. We value them as soon as we understand them, and we understand them in proportion as we join in the sentiment that dictated them. Here is the place to repeat the words of S. Augustine : *Da amantem et sentit quod dico*.\* There is no Christian heart, strongly impressed with the Divine Goodness and convinced of its own wretchedness, that has not obeyed a hundred times the same impulse, in wishing that all creation should come to its aid to render due thanks to the Author of all good gifts, and in regretting at the same time its inability to spread abroad His praises as widely as are His mercies.†

It is a characteristic of great emotions that they raise desires incapable of realisation. A tyrant of old who thirsted for blood, wished that the whole human race had only one head that he might have the gratification of cutting it off. The happiness of the saints should be to multiply without end the adorers of God by giving only one heart and one soul to everything that exists : or rather it should be to lend their heart and soul to every

\* *Tract. in Joan, xxvi. No. 5 ; Feria IV., inf. Octav. Pentec., lect. ii.*—Sic S. Thom. In corporalibus prius videtur, deinde gustatur : in spiritualibus prius gustatur, postea autem videtur. In *Psalm xxxiii. 9, super : Gustate et videte.*

† Examples : S. F. de Sales, *Traité de l'amour de Dieu, l. v. c. vii., etc.* ; *Étendard de la croix, Preface, initio.*—S. Theresa, *sa Vie par elle-même, c. xvi., etc.*

being in order that through them they might praise, thank, and love the Immortal King of Ages ; Him Who has made all things and Who orders all things for His own glory : *Deum cui omnia vivunt*.\*

The hymns to nature with which divine love inspired S. Francis of Assisium are well known. His seraphic soul seemed to expand itself to embrace all creation : a kind of supernatural sympathy caused him to feel what God had done for every being, and he thought it only just that each gift of the Divine Master should find an echo in his heart and that each creature should have a mouth-piece in his voice.† It was the same with S. Rose of Lima, that wonder of grace, that marvel of holiness, that ornament of the New World. She could not contemplate the least object, an insect, a plant, a flower or blade of grass without feeling for God the most lively emotions of

\* *Luc. xx. 38.*

† *Annales fratrum minorum, t. v.*—Ozanam, *Les Poetes franciscains*. There is a like ardour of feeling, a like extent of zeal and elevation of mind in the *Mémoires* of M. Olier. "Alas ! my God, how often hast Thou made me feel these desires ! How often hast Thou given me this zeal to have a hundred thousand and hundred millions of hearts to pour into them the sentiment of Thy Love ! a sentiment that flowed from Thy heart into mine as a drop of water from the depths of ocean. . . . My great wish, O Lord, is that Thou shouldst be honoured, glorified, revered by every creature ; it is that I might see Thee reign over the entire world, and there should no longer be any sceptre, crown, prince or monarch, power or authority on earth, but that is submitted to Thee. I would, O my God, multiply my life a thousand and a thousand times for Thy honour. I die of pain that I can only serve Thee for so short a time and in so feeble a manner. Ah ! would it were given to me to spread here below during hundreds of millions of years a zeal for Thy glory. Even then a small portion only of my desire would have been gratified. I would, oh my All ! that all creatures were changed into tongues to bless and praise Thee. I would have arms capable of clasping the world in order to carry it to Thee and fill it with love. Oh Love ! may I for ever love and serve Thee, if not in myself, at least in those Thy servants I shall leave after me in Thy Church !" *T. ii. 163, 252, etc.*

love, praise and thanksgiving. And this gave occasion for a miracle, astonishing even in the history of saints. One day she left her father's house before sunrise, and was passing through the garden in order to pray in solitude, when she was ravished, as it were, with the thought of God and began to cry out, in a holy transport: "Oh ye trees, plants, herbs, and flowers, every product of the earth, bless your Maker". Immediately, God wishing to show His servant the pleasure He took in the ardour of her love, all these insensible creatures began to move themselves as if to supply thereby for the voice they lacked. "You might have then seen," say P. Haysen, her confessor and biographer, "the trees beat their branches against each other, and dashing about their twigs and leaves as if desiring to draw harmonious sounds therefrom; herbs, flowers, fruits formed in a manner a joyful dance, and the shrubs bent their shoots even to the ground as if to adore their Creator."\* Thus God testified in a sensible manner what on another occasion He revealed to S. Magdalen of Pazzi, who asked Him, whilst hearing this Canticle—What glory could such exhortations, made to creatures without reason, procure Him? "When these words are pronounced with fervour," replied her Divine Master, "and from the depths of the heart these creatures are called upon to praise Me, it is in My sight as if they really united to bless Me: the praise of one equaling in My sight the praise of all."† We should accustom ourselves then to recite this Canticle with a lively devotion, and to pronounce all its verses with true and lowly feeling. In order to enter into

\* *Vie*, par le P. Haysen.

† *Vie*, par le P. Cepari.—*Act. Sanct.*, 25 maii.

the dispositions which it expresses we may think, whilst reciting it, of that burning furnace wherein for the first time it was sung.

We may represent to ourselves Nabuchodonosor and his court compelled to acknowledge the power and goodness of God towards His people. But above all let us imagine those eternal flames to which we had been condemned, and from which Jesus Christ has delivered us by the might of His Precious Blood ; let us think of the blindness of worldlings, whose darkness it is our duty to enlighten and whom we cannot hope to gain unless we are ourselves free from the corruption of earth, and consequently not without a signal help from the Divine Protection. Thus we shall feel no difficulty in becoming filled with the spirit of this Canticle ; and far from finding it monotonous, far from hurrying over it, as alas ! sometimes happens, we shall thank God for having preserved during so many ages so glorious a monument of His Providence, and for putting its words so often upon our lips after having made it under the New Law, as well as under the Old, the expression of so much love. We shall then love and meditate upon its beautiful sentiments, like that pious bishop who did not think an hour too much to spend in reciting it for his thanksgiving after the Holy Sacrifice.\*

Sometimes it will prove a happiness to recite it through devotion as the pious and learned Mabillon did, who, on his deathbed after eighty years of study and prayer could recall nothing finer, nothing worthier to occupy

\* J. B. Gault, of the Oratory, who succeeded his brother in the See of Marseilles, and whose canonisation was applied for by the clergy of France, 1642.—*Life*, by Segault, 8vo.



the last days of his life, nor more fitted to assure him a merciful reception on the part of his Sovereign Master.\*

*Ps. CXLVIII., Laudate Dominum de Cælis . . .  
CXLIX., Cantate Domino . . . CL., Laudate  
Dominum in sanctis ejus . . .*

Our remarks upon the Canticle *Benedicite* are applicable for the most part to the psalms that follow it.

These three psalms, united under the same doxology, are a figure according to the Liturgists of the three Churches—Militant, Suffering, and Triumphant—which are after the night of time at the dawn of the eternal day to be joined in one society to sing together forever the praises of the adorable Trinity.

All three psalms have for their principle the same sentiments of gratitude, love, and admiration, and are a development of the preceding Canticle. They express the same desires to see God praised, blessed, adored by every creature; or rather, it is an ever increasing desire, an exhortation more and more pressing. All the works of the Maker contribute to His glory; those at least to which He has not given the power to resist Him, or whose love is fixed by the clear sight of His Perfection, render homage to His Greatness. But this is but little in the eyes of the Psalmist, according to the judgment of the Holy Ghost, Who inspires him. He exhorts each of them to persevere in fidelity and to redouble if it can its devotion and ardour. Heaven and earth, creatures spiritual and creatures material, princes and peoples, every age of life, every order of nature,

\* *Life*, by D. Ruinart. It was so also with B. Peter Fourier, 1640. Alcuin likewise died reciting the Ps. cii.—*Benedic anima mea Domino.*



in a word everything that exists should unite in concert, and excite one another by a holy emulation to the service and praise of the Supreme Majesty. "In fine," says S. Fr. de Sales, in his Treatise of the Love of God,\* "after having composed a multitude of psalms with this inscription—*Praise God*, and after having addressed all creatures to excite them to bless the Sovereign Master, the sacred Psalmist runs over again and enumerates a great variety of means and instruments proper for celebrating the praises of this Eternal Goodness ; then falling, as it were, exhausted, he concludes his whole psalmody with this supreme aspiration—*Let every spirit bless the Lord* ; † that is to say, let everything that hath life live, and breathe only to bless its Sovereign Author !"

These three chants, which terminate the Psalter, are the last of the night Office on ferial days as well as upon feasts of Our Lord and of the saints ; and it is the tone of Jubilee that distinguishes them as well as those multiplied invitations to bless the Lord that has specially caused the name of Lauds or *praises* to be given to this second part.

It should be a consolation to ecclesiastics to have to repeat daily these repeated testimonies of zeal for the glory of God ; but it is likewise an encouragement and a lesson. In inviting all creatures to bless and praise their common Master how can they avoid animating themselves to honour and serve Him ? Doubly sanctified as they are by the sacraments in which they partake in their character of faithful Christians, and by the Orders which consecrate them to the service of the Altar,

\* *vi., ix.*

† *Ps. cl. 6.*

made one in a manner with our Saviour to glorify His Father on earth as the saints glorify Him in heaven, is it not to them as well as to the elect and angels that the most thrilling exhortations of the Psalmist are addressed : *Laudate Dominum in Sanctis Ejus*\* . . . *Laus Ejus in ecclesia sanctorum. Hymnus omnibus sanctis Ejus populo, appropinquanti Sibi.*†

*Canticle, Benedictus Dominus Deus.*

The antiphons, little chapter and hymn vary according to the Office, and take their character from it ; but the same Canticle with which Lauds ends is also its crown. Taken from the Holy Gospel this *new Canticle* that David seems to announce in the preceding psalm (cxlix. 1) transports us all at once from the Old Law to the New, from promises and figures to the Incarnation and the Real Presence of the Son of God on earth. One of the last priests of the Order of Aaron, the first who had had any knowledge of the coming of our Saviour, celebrating in lofty language the graces that the Redeemer brings with Him to the earth, exalts, with a holy enthusiasm the vocation of his own son who was raised up to be the precursor of the Son of the Most High. What can be more fitted to touch the heart of a priest called, like S. John the Baptist, to announce the Word made flesh, to teach men the knowledge of salvation, and to conduct sinners to redemption by the path of penance ?

It is narrated in the life of M. Vianney, Cure d'Ars,‡

\* *Ps. cxlix. 1.*

† *Ps. cxlviii. 15.*—*Cf. Dubois, vie de M. de Rance, t. i., liv. vi., c. x., p. 663.*

‡ *Life, by M. Monin, t. 1, l. 1, c. viii.*

that returning from his ordination to the sub-deaconate and chanting with his brethren this Canticle *Benedictus*, he pronounced the verse *Et tu, puer, propheta Altissimi vocaberis*, with such an accent of admiration, of gratitude and humility, that he filled with his own sentiments all who heard him. We have known likewise an ecclesiastic who could never hear these words without a throbbing of his heart and a sensible renewal of the grace of his vocation : *In sanctitate et justitia*.\* But when should a priest feel more the grandeur and holiness of this vocation than at the moment when having disposed himself by prayer to go up to the altar, he is about not only to see, like Zachary, the God of Israel show Himself on earth and devote Himself for His people, but also to produce, by the might of the words of consecration, this August Redeemer, and to offer Him as a Victim to His Father for the salvation of men, and to immolate himself with Him, by a like sacrifice, and in a like spirit ?

After the Antiphon *Benedictus* we recite the prayer or collect. It is the conclusion of the Office ; and it ought to sum up all its aspirations, and contain all its fruit. Nearly always it is composed of two parts : one

\* A monk of Citeaux saw one day during the singing of this Canticle a kind of flame shining upon the head of another religious named John, and he called the prior's attention to it. The prior having called John after the office—"What were you thinking of," said he to him, "whilst they were intoning the *Benedictus*?" "I thought," replied the monk, "that if I were in heaven I would never cease thus to bless God with the angels." "And what were your thoughts at the verse *Et tu, puer*?" "At that moment, Father, the thought of S. John Baptist so inflamed my heart that I could not restrain my joy." Then the prior understood what was meant by the flame which he had seen above this fervent religious : *Felicius ardebat Joannes intus*.—*Les Saints de l'ordre de Citeaux par Ch. Henriques*.

very short, in which the memory of the mystery or of the saint who is honoured is recalled ; the other, not so brief, in which we ask some special favour from God in connection with the solemnity : *Ut ibi nostra fixa sint corda, ubi vera sunt gaudia.\* . . . Ut esse mereamur, et inter prospera humiles, et inter adversa securi.† . . . Ut quod humani ore dicitur, in Tuis oculis esse valeamus (Pro pastor), etc.* Ordinarily we address the Father because He is the origin of all things and all things flow from Him, even in the Trinity ; but He is only invoked through the Son according to the recommendations of Our Lord Himself ; and never do we invoke directly the Holy Ghost because we consider Him as dwelling in the Church and praying by the mouth of its ministers.

The authors of most of these prayers are S. Gregory the Great and S. Gelasius.‡ It is one of the most admirable portions of the Office ; as has been truly said of them—they are inimitable for their simplicity, brevity, candour, and unction.§

Thus we observe that a perfect unity reigns throughout the Office. The conclusion answers the beginning—the collect, the invitatory ; the same idea pervades the whole, and everything converges to the same point.

We say nothing here about the suffrages or the anthems to the B. Virgin which are repeated at the evening Office. But we ask to be allowed at the end

\* *Dom. iv., post Pasch.* † *Hebd. i., Quad. in Sabb.*

‡ *Wallaf. Strabon. de Reb. Eccles. c. xxii.*

§ D. Gueranger, *Inst. lit.* Mgr. Pichenot, *Collectes*, 1867 :—"Elucet veteris Ecclesiæ spiritus, elucet in rebus ipsis apostolica quodam gravitas in sensu et in collocatione verborum grata quædam et perspicua concinnitas, adeo ut brevi compendio multa contineantur."—C. Bona, *Rer. liturg., ii. v. 4.*

of these practical reflections upon the night Office to insist upon the advice we have already given—not to postpone its recitation too long. We are aware that the Church leaves us a considerable latitude in this respect and that provided (except for some just reason) it be said before offering the Holy Sacrifice we violate none of Her regulations; but the love of order and esteem for prayer require something more than the actual laws of discipline. To speak generally in order to recite this Office well and not to expose ourselves to encroach upon other duties, it is very useful to discharge this one over night and to devote to it our first free moments.

Not that we advise you to join the Matins and Lauds of the morrow to the Vespers and Compline of the day that is closing. This practice would be attended with inconvenience. Fervour is all the more difficult to sustain the longer it has to last. It is possible therefore in thus heaping up prayers to expose ourselves to weariness, and, as a consequence, to disgust, negligence, or hurry. Moreover it is not perhaps very easy to pass all of a sudden from the ideas that suit one Office to those that are expressed by another. To do this it would seem that at least a short interval for reflection is desirable.

But what should be specially avoided is the practice of postponing, without necessity, the Office, to the last moment; there is, to say the least, *periculum in mora*. If we give to the Breviary the time required for sleep, are we not likely to say it hastily, or to shorten those exercises of piety, a failure in which is scarcely free from peril? And, if we wait till next morning, do we not place ourselves under a kind of necessity to cele-



brate Mass without having previously discharged this duty, or without having given a sufficient time to prayer in order to prepare for the divine sacrifice? A deplorable habit and one that never fails to have hurtful results.\*

A director of a seminary who was very zealous for the practice of prayer and who had great experience in the ministry insisted much upon this caution. He desired that there should be no failure in saying Matins and Lauds overnight and that they should be begun as soon as time and convenience permitted. Exemplary in all things, he was in this matter most exact. When the time had come, like Cardinal de Berulle he said *Venit hora*, and he then rendered homage to the religious exactitude with which Our Lord conformed to the times fixed by His Father. His maxim was that of an ancient doctor: *Ante tempus orari est providentia, et in tempore constituto obedientia; tempus autem præterire est negligentia.*†

\* "Sacerdos celebraturus missam, prævia sacramentali confessione quando opus est et saltem Matutino cum Laudibus absoluto orationi aliquantulum vacet," &c.—*Rub. Missal, i.* In this again the Divine Office resembles the manna:—Gathered early and taken in time this food has every flavour and answers every craving; but if it be neglected or taken late, there is a risk that it will be found changed and savourless.

† Hugh a S. Vict. *Expos. Regul. S. August., Cap. iii.* *Sub enit*—Yves de Chartres in one of his letters to William Abbot of Fecamp, sighed over the impossibility in which he found himself almost daily of reciting the Office at the prescribed hours. S. Peter Damian, writing to the abbot of a monastery, *ad Desiderium Cutinensem Abbatem*, relates, upon the word of one of his friends, Allard, Prior of Bremen, that a Bishop of Cologne who died with a great reputation for sanctity appeared to an ecclesiastic, and revealed to him that he was suffering, in Purgatory, a rigorous chastisement on account of the habit he had formed, amidst the difficulties of his ministry, of reciting all at once, every morning, the whole day's office.—See Baron, *ann.* 1095, No. 83.



## § II.

## AD LAUDES.

*Deus, in adjutorium. . . . Gloria Patri, etc.*

*Psalm XCII.*

Sentiments of Our Lord and of the Saints at the sight of the wonders accomplished in the creation of the world and in the foundation of the Church.

1. Dominus regnavit decorem indutus est: indutus est Dominus fortitudinem et præcinxit Se.

2. Etenim firmavit orbem terræ, qui non commovebitur.

3. Parata sedes Tua ex tunc; a sæculo Tu es.

4. Elevaverunt flumina Domine; elevaverunt flumina vocem suam.

1. As God the Father gave His command to chaos at the beginning of the world, so God the Son coming forth from the tomb by His Resurrection clothes Himself with power and glory, and enters upon the exercise of His royalty.

2. He sustains all things by His Word: *Portans omnia verbo virtutis Suæ.*—Hebr. i. Resting upon this foundation His Church shall for ever be the support of both the supernatural and moral world.

3. It is since Thy Incarnation, oh Lord, that Thou hast an earthly throne; but Thy Power and Thy Greatness had no other beginning than Thine own Existence.

4. Let the waves roar and the torrents lift up the voice of their waters: it is a further

5. Elevaverunt flumina  
fluctus suos a vocibus aqua-  
rum multarum.

6. Mirabiles elationes  
maris: mirabilis in altis Do-  
minus.

7. Testimonia Tua credi-  
bilia facta sunt nimis: do-  
mum Tuam decet sanctitudo,  
Domine, in longitudine die-  
rum.\*

homage to the Almighty Who  
created and governs them.

5. The world may heave  
and its anger burst forth: the  
work of God cannot be shaken:  
*Fundata est supra petram.*—  
Matth. vii.

6. Everything that strikes  
the mind should elevate it to  
God; but nothing proves more  
forcibly Divine Omnipotence  
than the utter helplessness of  
the passions in their rebellion  
against Its work.

7. Heaven and earth shall  
pass away; but Thy words, O  
Lord, shall not pass, and Thy  
Church shall be holy and  
honoured until the end of  
ages.

### *Psalm XCIX.*

Jesus Christ and His saints exhort us to praise God on  
earth as they praise Him in heaven.

1. Jubilate Deo, omnis  
terra, servite Domino in  
lætitia.

1. *Quid est jubilatio, nisi  
admiratio gaudii quæ verbis  
non potest explicari?*—S. Aug.

\* At Lauds the Antiphon of Confessors Pontiffs differ from those of Con-  
fessors only, and both instead of being taken from the Psalms are selected  
from the Epistle or Gospel of the Mass of Common. The reason for which is  
that they are to be used equally in all the Hours that follow. An exception  
is made in the case of the fourth Antiphon, which is not repeated at the  
Little Hours, and which suits the psalm *Laudate pueri* as well as the Canticle  
*Benedicite*.

*Omnis terra.* The true God is God over all nations. *Servite: Veritas liberavit nos, sed caritas servos fecit; et qui servit ex caritate cum lætitia servit.*—

S. Aug.

2. Introite in conspectu Ejus, in exultatione.

2. When we love God, what a happiness it is to place ourselves in His presence, and to know that we shall one day see Him! *Nobis promittitur conspectus Dei, veri Dei, Summi Dei!*—S. Aug.

3. Scitote quoniam Dominus Ipse est Deus; Ipse fecit nos et non ipsi nos.

3. *Interrogavi terram, mare et abyssos; et responderunt; Non sumus Deus tuus; quære super nos. Interrogavi cælum, solem, lunam, stellas: Neque nos sumus Deus Quem quæris, inquit. Et dixi omnibus iis: Dixisti mihi de Deo meo quod vos non estis: dicite mihi aliquid de Illo. Et exclamaverunt: Ipse fecit nos.*—

S. Aug.

4. Populus Ejus et oves pascuæ Ejus; introite portas Ejus in confessione, atria Ejus in hymnis: confitemini Illi.

4. *Populus ejus:* The clergy on earth are the people of God who frequent His house and sing His praises. *In portis;* and the elect in heaven: *In atriis. Beatus Laurentius orabat dicens: Gratias Tibi ego Domine quia januas Tuas ingredi merui.*—

S. Aug.

5. Laudate nomen Ejus

5. Three great reasons for

quoniam suavis est Dominus; praising God : His sweetness,  
 in æternum misericordia Ejus His mercy, and His truth.  
 et usque in generationem et  
 generationem veritas Ejus.

*Psalms LXII. and LXVI.*

1. The ardent love of Our Lord for His Father ; the fervour of His Saints. 2. The transports of His zeal ; a model of the Sacerdotal spirit.

I.

1. Deus, Deus meus, ad Te  
 de luce vigilo.

2. Sitivit in Te anima mea :  
 quam multipliciter Tibi caro  
 mea !

3. In terra deserta et invia  
 et inaquosa, sic in sancto  
 apparui Tibi, ut viderem vir-  
 tutem Tuam et gloriam Tuam.

4. Quoniam melior est  
 misericordia Tuas super vitas ;  
 labia mea laudabunt Te.

1. *De luce* : From its first  
 beat the heart is borne towards  
 its treasure : *Anima mea de-  
 sideravit Te in nocte, de mane  
 vigilabo ad Te.*—Ps. xxxvi.  
*Meus* : *O Deus, si ita dicere  
 fas est, meus.*—S. Dion, *De  
 div. Nom.*

2. *Sitivit* : Words dear to  
 S. John Gualbert, 12th July,  
 lesson vi. *Satiabor cum appa-  
 ruerit gloria Tua !*—Ps. xvi.

3. *Sic* for *Sicut* : To a re-  
 ligious and self-restrained mind  
 the world is both a desert and  
 a temple ; such a soul sees only  
 God and sees Him everywhere.

4. *Super vitas* : Preferable to  
 the most happy existence. Life  
 without grace is death ; life  
 with grace is the beginning of  
 bliss.

5. Sic benedicam Te in vita mea, et in nomine Tuo levabo manus meas.

6. Sicut adipe et pinguedine repleatur anima mea et labiis exultationis laudabit os meum.

7. Si memor fui Tui super stratum meum, in matutinis meditabor in Te, quia fuisti adjutor meus.

8. Et in velamento alarum Tuarum exultabo; adhæsit anima mea post Te; me suscepit dextra Tua.

9. Ipsi vero in vanum quæsi erunt animam meam; introibunt in inferiora terræ; tradentur in manus gladii; partes vulpium erunt.

10. Rex vero lætabitur in Deo: laudabuntur omnes qui jurant in Eo, quia obstructum est os loquentis iniqua.

5. *Benedicam Te*: The priest's vocation is to bless God all his life. *In nomine Tuo; invocando* or *jurando*.

6. Grace is the food of our soul; *unde pinguis esset nisi a Domino saturaretur?*—S. Aug. Let us be grateful for it.

7. Night interrupts not God's benefits towards us. *Non dormitabit neque dormiet.*—Ps. cxx. Nor should it check our gratitude.

8. *Adhæsit: Videte desiderantes; videte sitientes, quomodo hæret Deo.*—S. Aug. Words of S. Stephen and S. Laurence in their Office.

9. When death comes the wicked shall be the food of worms and the prey of hell. But the faithful soul delivered from its enemies shall find its happiness in the possession of God. *Repulerunt agnum eligerunt vulpem; merito partes vulpium facti sunt.*—S. Aug.

10. *Rex*: It is Jesus Christ Whose only joy was in God. *Qui jurant in Eo*: His servants who invoked the true God, if calumniated in this world, shall be crowned in the next.

## II.

1. Deus misereatur nostri et benedicat nobis : illuminet vultum Suum super nos et misereatur nostri.

2. Ut cognoscamus in terram viam Tuam, in omnibus gentibus salutare Tuum.

3. Confiteantur Tibi populi, Deus, confiteantur Tibi populi omnes.

4. Lætentur et exultent gentes, quoniam judicas populos in æquitate, et gentes in terra dirigis.

5. Confiteantur Tibi populi, Deus, confiteantur Tibi populi omnes ; terra dedit fructum suum.

6. Benedicat nos Deus, Deus noster, benedicat nos Deus, et metuant Eum omnes finis terræ.

1. The pledge of God's mercy towards us is Jesus Christ His Son: it is through Him we are healed, enlightened, and sanctified.

2. *Viam Tuam : Christum Tuum.*—S. Aug. Our Lord is for all of us the way, the truth, and the life. *Salutare: Salvatorem.*—Luc. i.

3. *Qui non zelat non amat.*—S. Aug. He who loves God desires His glory ; he who loves his neighbour should wish for his salvation.

4. *Judicas : gubernas.* The rule of God is most just, but that of Satan is tyranny itself. *Dirigis:* The Lord is our Guide. *Visitavit nos ex alto, ad dirigendos pedes nostros.*—Luc. i.

5. A new expression of our longings for the glory of God. *Oravit tertio eundem sermonem, dicens.*—Matt. xxvi. *Dedit fructum suum.* The fruit of the tree of life for the healing of the nations is the Victim of Calvary and of our Altars.

6. Threefold repetition of the name of God, threefold invocation of the Divinity ; allusion to the mystery of three Divine



Persons. The second is specially ours ; *Jesus Deus noster*, says the Church.

### *Canticle, Benedicite.*

Exhortation to praise the Lord addressed to every creature. It ought to urge us to bless Him in His works and gifts.

1. Benedicite omnia opera Domini, Domino ; laudate et super exaltate Eum in sæcula.\*

2. Benedicite, Angeli Domini Domino ; benedicite cœli Domino.

1. At first a general exhortation. *Benedicite : provocate ad benedicendum.* All creatures tend to glorify the Creator. May they attain this end !

2. Enumeration. Angeli : first by the elder ones of creation — the nearest to God. *Cælum quod oculis suscipimus non est valde pretiosum Deo*

\* What can these words : *Benedicite . . . Laudate*, mean when addressed to inanimate beings or creatures without intelligence ? They signify two things : 1st. That we should wish to see them attain the end for which they were created, which is, that they should manifest to men the perfections of God and induce them efficaciously to praise and bless the Sovereign Lord : *Ipsa quidem per se voce sua et corde suo Deum non laudant, sed cum ab intelligentibus considerantur, per ipsa laudatur Deus, et cum per ipsa laudatur Deus quodammodo et ipsa laudant Deum.*—S. Aug., in Psalm cxlviii. It is thus that a masterpiece is the glory of its author ; it is thus the valiant woman is praised, *Laudent eam in portis opera ejus.*—Prov. xxxi. 31. 2nd. That we may feel that we are incapable of praising God as He merits and as we must desire to do ; so we desire to multiply ourselves and extend ourselves to the level of His works in order to praise Him and love Him wherever he is both lovable and worthy of praise, which is a very right and meritorious desire. A learned writer remarks : *Nec est inutilis devotio si desideres v. g. universa natura tecum et propter te Deum laudet, gratias agat, benedicat, Sunt enim hujusmodi affectus, licet inefficaces summi meriti et signa summi in Deum amoris et gratitudinis. Sicut enim summæ malitiæ esset tales affectus assumere in malum ita maximæ est charitatis et meriti eosdem in bonum assumere.*—Lessius, *de Perfect divin.* XII. xix. 168.

*Cælum Dei animæ sanctæ sunt. Dicit enim : cælum mihi sedes est.*—S. Aug.

3. Benedicite, aquæ omnes quæ super cælos sunt, Domino ; benedicite omnes virtutes Domini Domino.

3. Greatness and wisdom of God in the extent, variety, and order of the universe. *Aquæ : Prædicatores nubes accipi possunt.*—S. Aug. *Virtutes Domini.* The forces that are revealed in nature ; also those who have power and therefore owe God the more honour. F. Eudes understood these words, *the virtues of the Lord.*

4. Benedicite sol et luna Domino : benedicite stellæ cæli Domino.\*

4. *Sol : In sole posuit tabernaculum Suum.*—Ps. xviii. Image of His glory and of His inexhaustible fecundity—*Luna, Stellæ*, saints and doctors. *Quorum doctrina fulget Ecclesia ut sole luna.*—Off. Apost.

5. Benedicite, omnes imber et ros, Domino ; benedicite omnes spiritus Dei Domino.

5. *Imber et ros.* An image of the grace that refreshes and fertilises souls. *Spiritus*, the winds and tempests. Whatever is gentle or powerful in nature should equally make us admire and bless the Lord.

6. Benedicite ignis et æstus Domino ; benedicite frigus et æstus Domino.

6. For God's sake we should readily bear all the changes of the seasons ; by so doing we

\* See *Etudes de Magn. de la Bouillierie sur le symbolisme de la nature*. The author follows the order of this Canticle.

7. Benedicite, rores et pruina Domino; benedicite gelu et frigus Domino.

8. Benedicite glacies et nives, Domino; benedicite, noctes et dies, Domino.

9. Benedicite, lux et tenebræ Domino; benedicite fulgura et nubes Domino.

10. Benedicat terra Dominum; laudet et super exaltet Eum in sæcula.

11. Benedicite montes et colles Domino; benedicite universa germinantia in terra Domino.

proclaim His wisdom and adore His sovereignty.

7. Dews and hoar frosts, prosperity and tribulation, pleasures and trials all should draw us to God and make us praise His name. *Si bona suscepimus, mala quare non sustineamus?*—Job ii.

8. Has not the soul also its showers and tempests, its dew-falls and droughts, its days and nights? But let her not therefore cease to bless God if she would have all things turn to her real good.

9. He who loves God, blesses Him constantly in privations as well as in enjoyments, in darkness as in light: *Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore.*—S. Theod., 8 Oct.

10. Around us and above us everything proclaims the Divine Perfections: *Mirum est quod homo semper Deum non laudat, quia quælibet creatura ad Eum laudandum semper invitatur.*—S. Greg., M.

11. God is everywhere wonderful; on the mountain heights and in the depths of the valleys: *Præparans montes in virtute Tua. . . Exultatione colles accingentur, clama-*

*bunt, etenim hymnum dicent.*—  
Ps. lxiv.

12. Benedicite fontes Domino; benedicite maria et flumina Domino.

12. *Mirabiles elationes maris, mirabilis in altis Dominus.*—Ps. xcii. Those who love the Lord never tire of pronouncing His name.

13. Benedicite cete et omnia quæ moventur in aquis Domino; benedicite omnes volucres cœli Domino.

13. Ye fishes of the sea and birds of the air show to men by your multitude and variety how admirable the power and wisdom of God are, and how great are the riches of His kingdom.—Gen. i.

14. Benedicite omnes bestiæ et pecora Domino; benedicite servi Domini Domino.

14. The wild beasts themselves praise the Lord in doing His will. We alone are able to offend Him!—*S. Chrysost. in die ord.*

15. Benedicite Israel Dominum; laudet et super exaltet Eum in sæcula.

15. It is by the faithful man, by Jesus Christ and His living members that the world fulfills its end and glorifies its Maker.

16. Benedicite Sacerdotes Domini Domino; benedicite, servi Domini Domino.\*

16. A remarkable gradation; after the children of men, the people of the Lord; after the chosen people, the priests and ministers of God; after priests, the holy and humble of heart. May the order of graces be that of thanksgiving!

17. Benedicite spiritus et

17. The humbler we are the

\* S. John Gonzales loved to repeat this verse and never pronounced it without feeling his heart inflamed with holy zeal (1479, June 12).

animæ justorum Domino ;  
benedicite sancti et humiles  
corde Domino.

18. Benedicite Anania,  
Azaria, Misael Domino ; lau-  
date et superexaltate Eum in  
sæcula.

19. Benedicamus Patrem  
et Filium cum Sancto Spiritu ;  
laudemus et superexaltemus  
Eum in sæcula.\*

20. Benedictus Es Domine  
in firmamento cœli, et lauda-  
bilis, et gloriosus, et super-  
exaltatus in sæcula.

more we bless God, because  
humility in all things refers to  
God the honour without reserv-  
ing any to itself.

18. These three Israelites,  
protected in the furnace by an  
Angel who was likened to the  
Son of God (Dan. iii.), represent  
the Church formed by Our Lord  
and occupied, in the midst of  
trials in praising with Him the  
Divine Majesty for every crea-  
ture.

19. Words added by the  
Church ; She desires to end all  
Her Canticles as She ends all  
Her Psalms with an invocation  
of the Blessed Trinity.

20. Dan. iii. 56. The Con-  
clusion of the Canticle a holy  
burst of the heart that is trans-  
ported by the love of God and  
would begin here below that  
which she is intended to do  
with Our Lord and His glori-  
fied members eternally in  
heaven.

### *Psalms CXLVIII., CXLIX., CL.*

Jesus Risen and united to His glorious members in-  
vites every creature to praise His Father with Him.

\* Once on the Feast of the Blessed Trinity F. Solano, transported by the  
lights he had received respecting this mystery, came out of his cell, crying out in  
all places around with an accent that went to the soul:—*Let us bless the Father,  
the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*—*Life of B. F. Solano, cord., 1677.*

## I.

1. Laudate Dominum de cœlis, laudate Eum in excelsis.\*

2. Laudate Eum omnes angeli Ejus; laudate Eum, omnes virtutes Ejus.

3. Laudate Eum sol et luna; laudate Eum omnes stellæ et lumen.

4. Laudate Eum cœli cœlorum; et aquæ omnes quæ super cœlos sunt, laudent nomen Domini.

5. Quia Ipse dixit, et facta sunt; Ipse mandavit et creata sunt.

6. Statuit ea in æternum et in sæculum sæculi; præceptum posuit et non præteribit.

7. Laudate Dominum de terra, dracones et omnes abyssi.

8. Ignis, grando, nix, gla-

1. *De cœlis.* To praise God worthily the angels of the earth must rise above the world and unite themselves to the angels in heaven.

2. *Virtutes:* powers, forces, armies, angelic legions.

3. After them, next to spiritual creatures, these which are the most exalted and brilliant beings of matter.

4. The heavens show forth the Immensity of God and the waters of heaven the abundance of His Grace.

5. Let us adore the Divine Omnipotence in the creation of the world.

6. If the beauty of creatures manifest the Perfections of God, does not their submission preach to us obedience to His law?

7. The Psalmist first considers here below the sea, *Hoc mare magnum.*—Ps. ciii. *Draco*, a marine monster.

8. The air after the sea.—

\* See S. Bernard on the death of his brother Girard. "At midnight, at the moment of giving up his soul, he began to sing: *Laudate Dominum de cœlis*, etc. Called at that time to him I was witness of this scene; *Tam cantando moritur homo, et moriendo cantat.*—*In Cant. Serm. xxvi. 11.*



cies, spiritus procellarum,  
quæ faciunt verbum Ejus.

9. Montes et omnes colles,  
ligna fructifera et omnes  
cedri.

10. Bestiæ et universa pe-  
cora, serpentes et volucres  
pennatæ.

11. Reges terræ et omnes  
populi, principes et omnes  
judices terræ.

12. Juvenes et virgines  
senes cum junioribus laudent  
nomen Domini, quia exal-  
tatum est nomen Ejus solius.

13. Confessio Ejus super  
cælum et terram et exaltavit  
cornu populi Sui.

14. Hymnus omnibus sanc-  
tis Ejus, filiis Israel, populo  
appropinquanti Sibi.

Every creature that does the  
will of God renders homage to  
His power, and glorifies Him  
after its manner.—Apoc. v. 13.

9. The earth, in short.—If  
you thank God for all these  
riches, they will praise Him  
through you.

10. *Cum vides hæc et gaudes  
et attolleris in artificem; cum  
terram consideras et pulchram  
vides, tu in illa laudas Deum.  
Vox quædam es mutæ terræ.*—  
S. Aug.

11. Kings should praise Him  
by proclaiming His sove-  
reignty; judges by respecting  
His law. *Unumquemque sicut  
vocavit Deus, ita ambulet.*—I.  
Cor. vii.

12. What a grand spectacle if  
all men thus praised God by  
doing His will, *sicut in cælo et  
in terra!*—*Excelsum est*: God  
alone is great; He alone would  
then appear so.

13. Happy those who under-  
stand this language of creatures,  
and who unite themselves to  
this concert of praise!—*Cornu*,  
power and glory.

14. To the saints above all,  
to the elect of God, belongs the  
duty of representing creation

before the throne of the Most High: *Rectos decet collaudatio*.—Ps. xxxii.

## II.

1. Cantate Domino canticum novum: laus Ejus in ecclesia sanctorum.

2. Lætetur Israel in Eo qui fecit eum et filii Sion exultent in Rege suo.

3. Laudent nomen Ejus in choro, in tympano et psalterio psallant Ei.

4. Quia beneplacitum est Domino in populo Suo, et exaltabit mansuetos in salutem.

5. Exultabunt sancti in gloria; lætabuntur in cubilibus suis.

1. *Cantare amantis est Vox hujus cantoris est fervor sancti amoris S. Aug.* Accordingly it is to the saints that these words are addressed—*Non est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris*.—Eccl. xv.

2. *Israel: Gens sancta, regale sacerdotium, populus acquisitionis*.—I. Peter ii. *Exultent in rege*. What a blessing to know that Jesus is the head of the Church, and that we are under His empire.

3. *In choro*: What Our Lord desires most is that our souls should be united to His, and this union is figured by that of the voices in a choir. *Ut unanimes uno ore honorificetis Deum*.—Rom. xv.

4. *Beneplacitum est*: He hath made His pleasure His love. *Complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum!*—Luc. xii.

5. What a motive for blessing God even whilst here below. Faith destroys distance and shows us as already present the

6. Exaltationes Dei in gutture eorum, et gladii ancipites in manibus eorum.

7. Ad faciendam vindictam in nationibus, increpationes in populis.

8. Ad alligandos reges eorum in compedibus et nobiles eorum in manicis ferreis.

9. Ut faciant in eis iudicium conscriptum: Gloria hæc est omnibus sanctis Ejus.

reward of the future: *Est sperandarum substantiæ rerum.*

6. Zeal for the glory of God associates the saints to the works of His justice, and causes them to rejoice over the fall of His enemies.

7. The Elect shall have the power of Our Lord as well as His bliss: *An nescitis quoniam sancti de hoc mundo judicabunt?*—I. Cor. 6.

8. *Judicabunt nationes et dominabuntur populis, et regnabit Dominus illorum in perpetuum.*—Sap. iii.; Luc. xxii.

9. *Conscriptum*: The judgment is indeed fixed and settled beforehand, but they shall confirm it by promulgating it:—*Gloria hæc; Nimis honorificati sunt amici tui, Deus.*—Psalm clviii.

### III.

1. Laudate Dominum in sanctis Ejus, laudate Eum in firmamento virtutis Ejus.

2. Laudate Eum in virtutibus Ejus; laudate Eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis Ejus.

1. *In sanctis*; in the holy places: *In cælo intra sancta.* Our churches are an anticipated heaven—*In firmamento virtutis*: where His power shines forth.

2. *In virtutibus*: in the wonders of His power—*Secundum multitudinem*—God is the fullness of all greatness.

3. Laudate Eum in sono tubæ; laudate Eum in psalterio et cithara.

4. Laudate Eum in tympano et choro; laudate Eum in chordis et organo.

5. Laudate Eum in cymbalis benesonantibus; laudate Eum in chordis jubilationis: omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.

3. *Laudemus Dominum vita et lingua corde et ore, vocibus et moribus.* — S. Aug. All our senses, all our faculties, all our powers of body and soul should praise Him and procure His glory.

4. Ardent and redoubled desires; marks of a lively love; what more natural for a soul which is created only to praise God for ever?

5. *Omnis spiritus.* The last word of the Psalter and the chief desire of Our Lord and the Saints. — S. Severinus, S. Claire, Abbot, S. Peter Celestin, and S. Vincent Ferrier, rendered up their souls to God reciting this verse.

### *Canticle of Zachary.\**

Thanksgiving for the benefit of Redemption,—the pledge of every other. We should yield ourselves to the influence of the Holy Ghost Who inspired Zachary and animates Holy Church.

1. Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, quia visitavit et fecit redemptionem plebis Suæ.

1. *Benedictus!* A burst forth of sentiments long restrained. *Deus Israel:* We are children of Israel by faith. *Israel Dei.*

\* Upon this Canticle may be consulted: *Explanatio Cantici Zachariæ Sacerdotis*; *Opusculum iv.*; R. D. Jacob Marchantii, 40. 1642; *Expositio in Cantica Officialia a Perezio Episc. Christopolitano, etc.*

—Gal. vi. *Visitavit* : by the Incarnation. *Redemptionem* : The captivity of sin was worse than that of Egypt and Babylon.

2. Et erexit cornu salutis nobis in domo David pueri Sui.

2. *Cornu* : force, power ; *cornu salutis*, the agent, author, principle of salvation, an all powerful Saviour ; Son of David, but at the same time Son of God.

3. Sicut locutus est per os sanctorum, qui a sæculo sunt Prophetarum Ejus.

3. *A sæculo ; ab exordio mundi*. All the Patriarchs foretold the Saviour, commencing with Adam. This great promise being fulfilled assures us of the realisation of every other.

4. Salutem ex inimicis nostris et de manu omnium qui oderunt nos.

4. *Salutem : Et erexit . . . Salutem*. He alone could break our chains and snatch us from the tyranny of the devil.

5. Ad faciendam misericordiam cum patribus nostris et memorari testamenti Sui sancti.

5. *Ad faciendam misericordiam erga patres nostros et ad declarandum Se memorem. . . .* The Covenant had Jesus Christ for its object and was accomplished by the Incarnation.

6. Jusjurandum quod juravit ad Abraham patrem nostrum, daturum Se nobis.

6. *Jusjurandum from testamentum : Quod est jusjurandum quod juravit.*—Gen. xxii.-xxviii. *Quantum est non sine jurejurando, in tantum melioris testamenti sponsor factus est.*—Heb. vii.

7. Ut sine timore de manu

7. *Inimicorum ; diaboli et*

inimicorum nostrorum liberati, serviamus Ei.

8. In sanctitate et justitia coram Ipso omnibus diebus nostris.

9. Et tu, puer, Propheta Altissimi vocaberis; præibis enim ante faciem Domini parare vias Ejus.

10. Ad dandam scientiam salutis plebi Ejus, in remissionem peccatorum eorum.

11. Pervisceramisericordiæ Dei nostri, in quibus visitavit nos Oriens ex alto.

12. Illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis

*Angelorum ejus. Ut serviamus Illi*: the end of the Redemption, and the desire of a truly priestly heart. *Sine timore*: In the Law of Grace love expels fear.—II. Tim. i.

8. *Coram Ipso*: Many are just in the eyes of men, few are so in the eyes of God as Zachary was.—Luc. i. Yet it is the one thing needful: *Quod es in oculis Dei hoc es, ait humilis S. Franciscus*.—Imit. iii. 56.

9. *Propheta Altissimi*: The greatness of the Precursor is founded upon that of the Saviour. Is not the vocation of the priest still more holy and sublime? *Pro Christo legatione fungimur. Sic nos existimet homo*.—I. Cor. iv.; ii. 5.

10. Such was the ministry of the Precursor; such is ours; to enlighten minds, purify hearts, to give to souls the knowledge of Christ and the science of salvation.

11. Redemption is the most admirable and gratuitous effect of God's mercy towards men; priests are its channels—*Oriens ex alto*, a fitting image.

12. The state of sin is a state of wandering, of darkness, and



sedent, ad dirigendos pedes  
nostros in viam pacis.

of death. Our Lord came to be  
our way, our light, and our life :  
*Via quam sequi debes, veritas cui  
credere debes, vita quam sperare  
debes.*—Imit. iii. 56.

*The Commemorations or Suffrages of the Saints.*

These are omitted on Doubles and at certain other times so as not to interfere with the Spirit of the Feast or Mystery.

*For the Blessed Virgin.*

The origin of the following Anthem has been attributed to the time of S. Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres, who died 1028 ; who established its use in his diocese. Like the Lesson vi. of the 9th September it is referred to the 18th Sermon, supposed to be by S. Augustine. S. Annon, Bishop of Cologne, died whilst reciting it, Dec. 4, 1075. S. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, who died in 1622, never tired of repeating it.\*

Sancta Maria, succurre  
miseris, juva pusillanimes, re-  
fove flebiles : ora pro populo,  
interveni pro clero, intercede  
pro devoto femineo sexu ;  
sentiant omnes Tuum juva-  
men quicumque celebrant  
Tuam sanctam commemora-  
tionem. *V.* Ora, etc.

*Clerus* : The clergy both  
secular and regular ; a common  
prayer and pledge of union.  
*Devotus sexus* : Women conse-  
crated by vow to the Lord ;  
nuns after ecclesiastics : *Lucia*,  
*Deo devota*, 13 Decemb.—*Cf.*  
De Maistre's *Traite du Sacri-  
fice*, ii., note.

*For Saint Joseph.*

*Ipse Jesus erat incipiens*      Let us unite in our homage

\* See *Œuvres de Mgr. Pie*, t. v., initio.

quasi annorum triginta ut putabatur Filius Joseph.

℣. Os justi meditabitur sapientiam.

℞. Et lingua ejus loquetur judicium.

Oremus. Deus qui ineffabili providentia beatum Joseph Sanctissimæ Genitricis suæ sponsum eligere dignatus es; præsta quæsumus, ut quem protectorem veneramur in terris, intercessorem habere mereamur in cœlis.

those whom Jesus has united in His love for them. Even in His public life the Son of God was pleased to hear Himself called the Son of Joseph.

Ps. xxxiii. Application founded upon these words of the Gospel: *Joseph, cum esset justus.*—Matth. i.

On his patronage. In seeing Jesus and Mary confided to this saint we learn to recommend to him whatever is dearest to us. Watch therefore, O Joseph! over the Church, the Mystical Body of Jesus, the family of the children of God; protect it, succour it, aid it in its wants, inspire its pastors with that fidelity and zeal of which thou art the model.

### *For the Holy Apostles.*

Gloriosi principes terræ quomodo in vita sua dilexerunt se, ita et in morte non sunt separati.

*Principes terræ:* The ecclesiastical power is derived from heaven, but it extends to all the earth: *Data est Mihi omnis potestas . . . euntes ergo . . .*—Matth. 26. *Quomodo dilexerunt se.* Allusion to David and Jonathan; a pleasing and fine example. S. Peter was head of the apostles, and the special apostle of the Jews. S. Paul,

the doctor of the gentiles ; they united to form one same church, the bond and centre of all the churches of the world. Peter praised the wisdom and writings of Paul ; Paul employed all his strength to consolidate and illustrate the seat of Peter. The Church never separates them in her worship.

Ÿ. In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum.

S. Paul had already applied this verse of Ps. xviii. to the preaching of the Gospel.—Rom. x. But it is especially since their death that the apostles are by their writings and their disciples the light of the world.

R̃. Et in fines orbis terræ verba eorum.\*

Oremus. Deus cujus dextera tua beatum Petrum ambulans in fluctibus ne mergeretur, erexit, et co-apostolum ejus Paulum tertio naufragantem de profundo pelagi liberavit, exaudi nos propitius et concede ut amborum meri-

*Oremus* : An invitation to pray not by ourselves but in union with Jesus Christ and with His members, by the Holy Ghost, in Whom we are one. *Cujus dextera* : Examples showing that though it may please God to expose His ministers to

\* An ecclesiastic ought not to be surprised, says S. Peter Damian, that he has to say successively, the versical and response : or to speak to God in the plural number ; representing the Church it is natural that he should employ Her language and exercise Her functions : “ Ecclesiæ est in omnibus una et in singulis tota. Dignum est ergo ut quidquid in sacris Officiis a quibuscumque fidelibus particulariter agitur, hoc Ipsa Ecclesia per unitatem fidei et caritatis amorem unanimiter agere videatur.”—Opusc. XI. *de Dominus vobiscum*.

tis æternitatis gloriam consequamur.\*

trials, yet He watches over them, and so with what confidence ought not His providence to inspire us in the midst of the gravest perils?

### *For Peace.*

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis nisi Tu, Deus noster.

We may here recall the words of the Prophet : *Quærite pacem civitatis, et orate pro ea Dominum quia in pace illius erit pax vobis*—Jer. xxix. ; and that of the Apostle : *Obsecro primum omnium fieri obsecrationes . . . ut quietam et tranquillam vitam agamus in omni pietate et castitate*.—I. Tim. II. *Non est alius : Hoc solum habemus residui ut oculos nostros dirigamus ad Te*.—II. Paral. xx.

Ÿ. Fiat pax in virtute tua.

R̃. Et abundantia in turribus tuis.

These words are addressed to Jerusalem, or rather to the Church, *the true city of God*, according to the verse that precedes : *Rogate quæ ad pacem sunt Jerusalem*.—Ps. cxxi. The pastors of the Church are Her towers and bulwarks.

Oremus : Deus, a Quo sancta desideria, recta consilia et justa sunt opera, da servis

*Desideria, consilia, opera.* Everything comes from God : *Et velle et perficere Da pacem*

\* This prayer was composed by Leo II. at the time the Turks menaced the whole of Christendom.—Cf. *Archæologia sacra principum apostolorum, à Didaco de Cea, 40 ; Romæ, 1636.*

Tuis illam quam mundus dare  
non potest pacem, ut et corda  
nostra mandatis Tuis dedita,  
et hostium sublata formidine  
tempora sint Tua protectione  
tranquilla.

. . . Conclude. 1. That  
the Church loves peace, and  
looks upon war as a scourge.  
2. That every event in this  
world, small and great, is ruled  
by Providence. 3. That the  
humblest soul may by prayer  
influence the government of the  
whole world. 4. That all our  
desires and all our prayers ought  
to tend to the observance of the  
law of God and our own sancti-  
fication.

## § II.

### *On the Office of the Morning or Little Hours.*

## CHAPTER I.

### OF THE LITTLE HOURS IN GENERAL.

IF the Office which is recited in the calm and stillness of the night makes us think of the eternal repose which follows the day of this life and transport our minds to the midst of the angels and elect, the first Hours of the morning bring us back to earth and to our career of trial: *Oportet operari donec dies est.*\* It is to this life, to the present day, that these Hours relate. They consecrate the first fruits and the works thereof to God. They show us the road we must follow and the goal we must reach. They put before us the difficulties which await us, the enemies which threaten us, and the aids we have to ask for from heaven.† Formerly each of these Hours had to be recited separately, at a certain time, a fact which its very name indicates.‡ And it must be owned

\* *Joan. ix. 4.*

† "Necesse est ut homo cogitet quemadmodum ambulet in via, ne remaneat, ne retroeat, ne aberret, ne claudicando non perveniat."—*In I. Ep. Joan. Tr. v. 3.* "Via curritur: patria quæretur, in qua nullus orandi locus est. Sed tantum laudandi."—*S. Aug., Sermon. clix. 1.*

‡ The day, that is to say, the interval comprised between sunrise and sunset, was formerly divided into twelve hours: *Nonne duodecim sunt horæ diei?*—



it was an edifying sight for the faithful thus to see, from hour to hour, the ministers of the Church suspend every other occupation and turn towards God to offer Him their homage.\* But this arrangement was difficult to reconcile with the calls of the ecclesiastical ministry. Accordingly, the custom has arisen of forming of all these hours but one Office which is recited without break after the first exercises of the day. This practice, long authorised, is founded upon good reasons. Besides assuring a valuable freedom it seems to enter into the spirit of the Office in bringing together prayers which have the same motive and object, and the likeness of which reveals the one same design and the same whole.† This unity is evident and characteristic. With a single exception all these Hours are composed of sections of one and the same psalm, the verses of which express the same senti-

*Joan. xi. 9;* and these twelve hours were grouped into four equal portions of three hours each, which Antonius calls *trihoria*. The Church divided naturally into four the part of the Office comprised between Lauds and Vespers, and She fixed for the recitation of these four parts of the Office the beginning of each of these four portions of the day—the first hour, the third, the sixth, and the ninth; in other terms: Prime, Tierce, Sexte, None, the four hours at which the householder of the Gospel went out to send labourers into his vineyard.

\* Notice that the Little Hours contain in round numbers twelve psalms, one for each hour of the day, as the Nocturns of ferias reckon also twelve, one for each hour of the night. Thus are accomplished as literally as possible the intentions of the Holy Ghost: *Sine intermissione orate.*—*I. Thess. v. 17;* and those of the Church: *Laus et perennis gloria*, etc.

† Venerable Bede (died 735) speaks of a bishop who got up from the king's table to go and recite None because it was three o'clock. The Martyrology of Ravenna, published by S. Adon, Archbishop of Vienne, about 858, relates that a great number of priests having been martyred near Antioch, during the persecution of Dioclesian, upon the spot on which they were put to death celestial voices were heard singing the praises of God at the same hours at which these priests were accustomed to chant them, that is to say, at Prime, Tierce, Sexte, None, and at Vespers.—See *Act. Sanct. for Jany.* Cf. S. Greg., *Magn. Dial. c. xxi.*, and *Martyr. rom. 14 mart.*

ment or the same idea ; and by a privilege, shared only by the last Hour of the evening, they admit scarcely any difference as regards times or solemnities ; so that they remain invariably the same during the course of the year, and differ hardly one from another—the last three especially except by the name and place assigned to them.

It is this peculiarity which gives the 118th psalm a position of its own in the Liturgy ; one which entitles it to the attention of the clergy and requires us to make a special study of it. As it holds then so considerable a place in the Office, filling one half of the Canonical Hours, and since the sanctification of our days depends a good deal upon the manner in which we recite it, ought we not to study the motives which induced the Church to place it so often upon our lips, and take care to animate ourselves with the spirit with which it inspires us, and with the thoughts, sentiments, and reflections which each verse of it should stir up in our souls ?\* This 118th psalm is the longest in the Psalter. It has one hundred and seventy-six verses divided into twenty-two octonaries or strophes of eight verses, the initial of which corresponds to one of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. But it is owing less to the number of its verses and its popular form than to its object that it has been, at all times, the object of such particular esteem and devotion.

\* Here we give the opinion of a Council of Cologne in one of its decrees for the reform of the clergy, 1536. "Optandum ut psalmus ille centesimus decimus octavus, qui toties non sine causa in Ecclesia replicatur ore simul et correspondente singulis verbis mente decantatur et cum Psalte et animo et corde dicamus : *Voluntarie sacrificabo Tibi . . . Et . . . Confitebor nomini Tuo quoniam bonum est.*"—*Ps. liii. 8*, 1st of Prime.

It is called the Psalm of the Law, or the Canticle of the Divine Goodwill. Consecrated to the praise of the precepts of the Lord it served among the Jews to inculcate its practice on the Levites and people. Many commentators place it among the Gradual Psalms, that is to say, according to the common explanation, among the number of those which the Israelites were wont to sing in going up to the Temple of Jerusalem for the great solemnities. This in truth is only a conjecture, but it accords perfectly with the characters of the psalm, and it explains very happily every peculiarity of its length, its simplicity, and the alphabetical order of its octonaries.\* The idea to which the Psalmist returns incessantly, is that the Law of God is a road, a way, a path, which we must follow in order to arrive at our end. From the beginning of the Church the Christians took pleasure in its recital, chanting it to maintain and animate their fervour.† The holy doctors praised it and commented upon it enthusiastically as the most excellent abridgment of evangelical morals. S. Hilary wished that every Christian

\* There are other acrostical psalms, but they have only one verse for each letter of the alphabet, *v.g.*, the xxv., xxxiv., cxlv., or but one member of a verse as the cxi., *Beatus Vir*, and cxii., *Laudate* of the vespers of Sunday. The 118th psalm contains as many octonaries as these other have verses. It is in allusion to this peculiarity that Rupert, following S. Ambrose, says of this psalm that it is the alphabet of the children of God, and that all perfection from Alpha to Omega is contained in it in its essential elements.—This acrostical form has been adopted in one of the Hymns of the Breviary: *A solis ortus cardine*, which is recited at Lauds on Christmas day.

† “Cæcilia Virgo Domino decantabat, dicens: *Fiat cor meum immaculatum!*”—*Off. 22 Nov. 1<sup>um</sup> Resp.* “Unde tam celebri laude, vel cur tam perpetua consuetudine canonicis Horis hic psalmus decantari solitus sit, dubium esse reor.”—Alcuin, *Opusc. II. in Psalm.* “Legi in ejusdam monachi visione quod ab Angelo sit admonitus ut psalmum illum in quo moralis virtus describitur. sæpe in oratione repeteret.”—*Id. de Psalm. usu., p. 1. No. ii.*

should learn it by heart from infancy so as to meditate on its sentiments during his whole life. S. Ambrose found this psalm excelled all the others as much as the brightness of the sun exceeds that of the stars, and he composed a long work to develop its doctrine to his people. After much thought S. Augustine also undertook its exposition and devoted more than thirty instructions to it,—the fruits of profound reflections and of long labour: *Ut portari, psalmum illum magnum pertractavi et exposui* (*Præf. in hunc psal.*). The Church then acts with consideration in showing Her esteem for this psalm by requiring Her ministers to recite it daily ; in so doing She follows the oldest traditions and authorities the most weighty.

In this as in everything else She provides admirably both for the requirements of divine worship and for the interests of Her clergy.

1. In the first place, if we consider the interest of God, what more glorious for Him than to see His ministers thus praise and bless every day His Adorable Will? What homage can be more suitable on their part? One thing only is there that wounds and dishonours the Divine Majesty—sin—resistance to His Will,—and transgression of His Laws. Unhappily sin is the habitual state of the greater part of mankind. Whilst in heaven millions of angels and of saints revere His greatness, whilst the rest of creation obey the orders of His Infinite Wisdom, His most perfect creatures, even the members of His Son, abuse their gifts, trample under foot His Laws, and thereby protest against His Sovereignty. To repair these outrages, to make amends for so general and persevering a revolt, what should His ministers do but

multiply their adorations, never cease to bless His Holy Will, and repeat without end their protestations of submission and obedience? Yes, this reparation is just and desirable. To that cry of Hell repeated on all sides by the children of Adam : *Non serviam*.\* *Dirumpamus vincula eorum*.† we must oppose another more powerful, if possible, or at least as ardent, and as unceasing—the cry of devotedness and of fidelity. The ministers of God should not be less constant in the expression of their love than the sinner in his hatred ; and as this earth is daily desolated by the deluge of sin, they should try therefore each day to make heaven rejoice by testimonies of their worship and adoration.‡ Such a homage undoubtedly offers to God a spectacle which is both glorious and consoling. If the impiety which invaded the earth at the time of the deluge rendered the virtue of the just Noe so dear to His heart, if He consoled Himself—if we may use the expression—for the universal corruption by beholding with what fidelity that holy patriarch fulfilled His laws and walked in His presence, what a satisfaction is it not for His greatness, what joy for His sanctity to consider that, in spite of all the excesses of pride and all the scandals of irreligion, there are still to be found here below humble, upright and devoted souls who revere His authority, who esteem it their happiness to fulfil and meditate upon His Laws and to employ all their zeal in inspiring others with a love for them. Never does the earth offer to the sight of its Divine Master a more pleasing sight than when represented by Her ministers and by a chosen body of pure and ardent souls, the

\* *Jer. ii. 20.*† *Ps. ii. 2.*‡ Olier, *Lett. c. xxxiv.*

Church applauds thus, on every side, the Will of heaven and proclaims Its supreme equity.\* The voice of His religious and of His priests seems an echo of the eternal Amen which angels and saints cease not to repeat before the throne of His Adorable Majesty,† and we can see realized in this world the longing of the Son of God for the glory of His Father: "Hallowed be Thy name! Thy Kingdom come! Thy Will be done on earth as It is in heaven!" *Sicut in cælo et in terra.*‡

2. Besides the glory of Her divine Spouse the Church seeks the welfare of Her ministers; She therefore offers them in this psalm a model of perfection and an admirable compendium of every prayer.

The psalms being the expression of the sentiments of our Saviour they all retrace under some one or other aspect the interior of His soul. The particular reason of this particular psalm is to express them in reference to the present life, by exposing to our view the motive that induced Him to take it up in His own Person, the end for which He did this and the use He made of it.

Now, His justice is perfect because His obedience was so unreserved. We see in many places of Scripture to what an extent He carried His fidelity to the commands of the Divine Majesty—*Ecce veni, ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem Tuam.*§ *Non quæro voluntatem Meam, sed voluntatem Ejus Qui misit Me. Quæ placita sunt Ei facio semper.*|| But where shall we find this disposition of the

\* "Per totum psalmum universalis sanctorum chorus eloquitur, qui ab initio mundi sive fuerunt, sive sunt, sive futuri essent creduntur. . . . Unus tamen ubique introducitur ad loquendum ut virtus unitatis in Ecclesia concordii possit agnosci."—Cassiod, *Introd. in Psalm.*

† *Apoc. xix. 4.* ‡ *Luc. xi. 2.* § *Hebr. x. 5, ex Ps. xxxix.*

|| *Joan. vi. 38; viii. 29; v. 30; iv. 44.*



Divine Son manifested in so touching and at the same time so fully as in this holy psalm? In it He discovers to us unto what extent He respects and loves the will of His Father, with what ardour He desires to see Him everywhere loved, honoured, and obeyed. Herein He makes us feel the truth of what He has elsewhere spoken, that He carries the Law written on His heart, that it is the constant object of His affection and of His thoughts and the rule of His judgments. He seems to survey in thought every circumstance, all states in which He is to be found in His Own Person or in that of His members, and then His heart and soul are carried towards the Divine Will as towards their unchangeable centre. At one time He thrills with joy; then He is afflicted and groans; in other places, He congratulates Himself, He is inflamed with zeal, He threatens; further on, He softens, trembles, hopes, supplicates; but it is ever the will of God that absorbs and inspires Him. His accents take every form, and adopt themselves to every condition and every subject; but under this variety of expression there continues an invariable disposition of heart and mind; the disposition of a perfectly holy soul that has now only one desire, and seeks henceforth only one treasure—the good pleasure of Him Who alone is great, eternal, perfect: *Solus bonus Rex, solus præstans, solus justus et omnipotens et æternus*.\* It recurs constantly to this thought because

\* II. Mac. i. 25. "Hanc legem amat, amplectitur, deosculatur; hanc nocte dieque versat; huic intelligendæ inhiat; non a manibus unquam, non ab ore dimittit; hanc gestat in oculis; hanc uno pectori medullisque infigit; hujus admiratur speciem, arcana scrutatur; in ea spem, gaudia, gloriam, divitias, amicitias, consilia, omnia denique reponit; hujus æquitati ac rectitudini se aptat; ea se regit, se tuetur, se exornat; arma hæc, hunc clypeum, hos ornatus, venustatem qui cogitat."—Boss. *Dissert. in Psalm c. 1, No. 11.*

its ardour is unceasing; and repeats it continually because it is too great to be at any time completely expressed. It might be said it was a thirst or hunger which grows the more it was satisfied, or rather which increases by the very efforts made to slack it. Thus, it is perfection itself which the Church puts each day before our eyes; and She makes us see it in its most sublime type, such as God beholds it in the heart of the Saint of saints. What more touching object, especially for His ministers, for those who have one and the same vocation and ministry with Jesus Christ and should therefore have one and the same spirit, will, and life with Him!

Whilst it puts before us the model of all perfection this psalm likewise inculcates the most essential principles of the Christian and ecclesiastical life. What is the sum of our duties on earth? Is it not to accomplish in all things the will of God? *Deum time, et mandata Ejus observa: hoc est enim omnis homo.\** From the moment the Creator called us into life He assigned to us an end and traced for us the way to arrive at it. To follow the path of the Lord, to observe His commandments—such is our course—such is our only rule of conduct. Now, what can be more adapted to penetrate us with these maxims than the daily recitation of a psalm in which the Holy Ghost presents them under every form, and in which they are surrounded by every consideration most calculated to make them loved. Can it be supposed that any one could forget or transgress during the day, the only Law to which he is subjected, when he has entertained

\* *Eccl. xii. 13.*

himself so long in the morning with the consideration of its equity, its advantages, and its necessity.\* After having so loudly protested his desire to walk in the way of the Lord, after having so often repeated his readiness to suffer everything rather than depart from it, can it be imagined that he would willingly turn away or retreat before any obstacle that presented itself? Ought he not rather feel himself bound like S. Paul by an indissoluble bond to the continued accomplishment of the Divine Will? *Ecce alligatus ego spiritu, vado in Jerusalem.*†

Such is the design of the psalm, such the fruit it ought to produce. But the precept which the Church gives to Her ministers to recite it daily seems to widen and, at the same time, render more precise its signification in our regard.

It teaches us and we ought unceasingly to remember :

1st. That sanctity does not consist in the vocation but in the conduct; *in operatione consistit*: that the merit of our life depends upon the free subjection of the will to that of God; that in vain will we distinguish ourselves from our brethren by the brilliancy of our works or sublimity of our duties unless we surpass them also by our fidelity to the Law of God: *Sprevisti omnes*

\* "Cogitatum tuum habe in præceptis Dei et in mandatis Illius assiduus esto, et Ipse dabit tibi cor, et concupiscentia sapientiæ dabitur tibi."—*Eccl. vi. 37.* "Altiora te ne quæsieris et fortiora te ne scrutatus fueris; sed quæ præcepit tibi Deus illa cogita semper."—*Ibid. iii. 22.* "Os justi meditabitur sapientiam, et linguæ ejus loquetur judicium. Lex Dei ejus in corde ipsius et non supplantabuntur gressus ejus."—*Ps. xvi. 32, 33.* These last words so often repeated in the Office of Confessors reveal to us the secret of their strength. The heart inspires our discourse and directs our acts.

† *Acts xv. 22.*

*discedentes a judiciis Tuis. . . . Maledicti qui declinant a mandatis Tuis.\**

2nd. That it is not enough for us to teach others the Law of God, but we ourselves must meditate upon it, love and practise it: *Factorem quærit Deus, non pictorem.†*

3rd. That, in order to be faithful to the Law of God, there are many sacrifices to be made, combats to be fought, and therefore we must ever excite ourselves to fervour and generosity.

4th. That, being ministers of the Lord, we should not content ourselves with accomplishing His Will in ourselves, but should labour to make It reign in the world ; this should be the object of all our desires and of all our efforts ; our heart should constantly tend towards this end, as bodies tend towards their centre and the rivers towards the sea.

5th. That the grace of God is necessary both to merit and to obtain His reward, and that were we to arrive at heaven's gate, and on the point of entering it, we are yet like S. Peter on the waves of the sea, ready to sink therein without help, but from the hand of Him Who calls us and Who desires to draw us to Himself: *Fiat manus Tua ut salvet me.‡*

However, numerous and important as are these practical consequences, this psalm is a prayer as well as an instruction. From beginning to end the Psalmist addresses himself to the Lord ; his heart pours itself out in holy aspirations, in testimonies of worship, and in protestations of love ; he expresses unceasingly to God the ardour which urges him to conform himself to His

\* *Ps. cxviii. 21.*    † *S. Aug., Homil. l.*    ‡ *Ps. cxviii. 173.*

desires and to behold His holy law known, honoured and obeyed by all the earth. They are not therefore mere reflections upon which the Church desires us to meditate, She asks our affections. She desires to elevate our heart as well as our mind to God—to direct all our aspirations towards the accomplishment of His Will, making It the object of our desires as well as of our resolutions. Who cannot see the results of such a practice frequently repeated? Who does not feel the influence which such a prayer must exercise upon the Heart of God and upon the soul of His ministers?

First upon God, provided only it be sincere, animated with a true spirit of faith and humility, is it possible it should be ineffectual? *Whoever asks obtains,\** says our Saviour. *Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find.†* *Knock and it shall be opened unto you. When a child asks for bread is there a father so unnatural as to give it a stone? If then you, being wicked as you are, cannot refuse to your children the food they ask, how shall your Heavenly Father refuse His Spirit to those who beseech Him to give It to them?‡* Such promises admit of no exception; and if there be one petition of which they specially guarantee the efficacy must it not be that which has for its object respect for the Divine Law and its fulfilment?§ Moreover, by the fact of our making this prayer we already enter, up to a certain point, into the dispositions we pray for. There are in the words, and above all, in the sayings of the Holy

\* *Luc. xi. 10.*    † *Matt. vii. 7.*    ‡ *Luc. xi. 11.*

§ “Domine, quas tuorum preces exaudis, si has non exaudis?”—S. Aug., *De Civ. Dei, xxii. 8.*

Ghost a secret virtue which acts upon those who pronounce them, and it is difficult to withdraw oneself entirely from it. Sentiments tend to harmonize with language. Except there be a distraction or resistance of the will we humble ourselves when uttering words that imply humility; we feel fear in using the accents of terror; we are sorrowful, we reassure ourselves, we rejoice, and love according as we use the language of repentance, confidence, joy, or affection. Now these impressions are reproduced each time the words are repeated, and by dint of repetition they penetrate the soul, they fix themselves there in a lasting manner, they end by passing into its very constitution. Hence in part as we have before observed, the importance of vocal prayers and those of the Office in particular.\* A psalm like the one with which we are concerned, which has for its object the accomplishment of the Divine Will, that breathes only respect and love for the law of God, that is a constant protestation of submission to the Sovereign Master, has then necessarily a double efficacy. On the one hand, it obtains from heaven the graces of obedience and fidelity; on the other, it disposes the soul to profit by this help; and by these two means it tends to assure our perseverance and to make us

\* *Quis petit a Deo dum petit accipit*, says S. Ambrose, *Ipsum enim petere accipere est*. These words are true to the letter, and necessarily true when prayer has virtues and moral qualities for its object. To desire to be vicious would be to be so, and to become so more and more; to wish for perfection and to ask it of God is to begin to make oneself perfect, and to become better by the very act. "What a history would it be," says a learned Doctor, "if one could collect every religious impression, all the resolutions, the consolations, the resignations that, for holy souls, are attached to the simple recitation of the Psalms; if it were possible to fix the place they occupy in the souls of the heroes of the kingdom of God!"



advance in the steps of our Divine Master in the way of true sanctity.

These considerations justify sufficiently, it would seem, the predilection of the Church for this fine psalm. It explains also the esteem and regard with which it has always inspired wise and learned ecclesiastics.

Indeed in the last century there were in France striking proofs of these dispositions. Though the taste for innovation was general and though some excellent minds imagined that fervour might be reanimated by giving another form to the prayers of the Church used by the clergy of France, many complaints were heard when it was proposed to substitute for the *Beati immaculati* a long string of psalms which would give a new signification to the Morning Office. Bossuet was among the first to express his disapproval. In his last years he was prevailed upon to allow that there might be a revision of the Office, but upon this point he resisted and was immovable. "Entirely taken up with this psalm," writes the Abbé Ledieu in his *Memoires*, "he said that it must be left in the Little Hours for every day ; and he is resolved to maintain it there, so necessary does he think it for the interest of piety." He had moreover shown in many of his writings the esteem in which he held it. Not content with quoting it with great commendation, he placed a translation of it at the end of his Catechism for the use of the faithful ; and in his commentary upon the Psalter, he applied himself specially to set forth its merits and smooth down its difficulties.\*

\* To the authority of Bossuet may be joined, if desired, that of Paschal. "He had a sensible taste for the whole Office," says Madame Percer, his sister, "but particularly for the Little Hours, because they are composed of the 118th

The reformers also urged the interests of piety. According to them the spirit of prayer required more food and variety. "Is it not," said they, "devoting ourselves to routine and condemn ourselves to disgust and weariness repeating every morning the same psalm—a psalm long and monotonous—that produces, without ceasing, ever the same thought without offering anything to the imagination that may strike or interest it."

Doubtless we expose ourselves to routine if we often repeat the same formula as we also expose ourselves to distractions and to disgust if we prolong our prayer too much ; but what practical conclusion is to be drawn from this ? Must we renounce prayer for fear of distractions ? Must we shorten every prayer through fear of being surprised by *ennui* ? \* or must we change every moment our thoughts and expressions ? Everyone must see that some method should be here observed, and if people blame the use which the Church makes of this psalm they should also blame the oldest and most venerated practices. Do we not daily at Mass say the same prayers ? Do not the faithful, as well as the clergy,

psalm, in which he found wonderful things. When he entertained himself with his friends upon the beauty of this psalm, he was transported and seemed quite carried away by his feelings"—*Cf. Eliz. Seton*, par Madame Barberry, p. 24.

\* "Nempe quo brevior oratio, eo citius cœlos penetrabit ? I nunc dive Antoni et properantem nimis solis ortum increpa." . . . Guyet, *Heortologie*, i. xiv. 7. It will not be out of place to recall here the censure pronounced in 1517 by the University of Paris against this proposition of Erasmus. *Christus in orando damnat multiloquium*. "Erronea est ; non enim damnatur omne multiloquium in oratione sed illud quod infidelitate procidit, existimantes Deum non aliter audire aut intelligere orantes nisi multiloquio utentes ; quod explicans Christus non solum dicit : *Nolite multum loqui* sed adjungit ? *sicut ethnici faciunt, putant enim quod in multiloquio suo exaudiuntur*." —D'Argentre, *Collectio judiciorum*, t. ii. p. 67.

recite morning and evening the same Lord's Prayer, the same Hail Mary, the same Creed, the same acts of Faith, Hope and Charity ? \* Must the danger of routine make us abandon this custom and vary the formulas ? Certainly not ; the fear of faults into which we may fall in prayer is no reason for not praying or praying only rarely. It is but a motive the more to watch over ourselves in order to pray well, and this is always possible. For we can always avoid what is displeasing to God, and as to routine in particular, far from infallibly leading us to it, the habit of praying well takes us farther away by the taste and facility which it gives to the soul. Routine is the result of *negligence* : it is only contracted because we accustom ourselves to pray badly, without attention and therefore without fervour.

That so long a psalm should have few distinct ideas, that it turns entirely upon disposition of the soul, that each verse is a protestation of respect, love, and devotedness to the law of God—this is acknowledged on all hands ; but is the recitation of it less salutary on that account ? Has it therefore less merit ? Must we find less attraction in it for the same reasons ? Every enlightened priest knows that prayer does not consist in intellectual acts, that it does not derive its virtue from

\* "Commemorate vosmetipsos", says S. Augustine on the subject of prayer, "non pigeat repetere. Bona est repetitio ne subrepat oblivio. Ne dicatis : Dixi heri, dixi hodie. Quotidie dic ; commemora fidem tuam."—*Serm. lviii., No. 13.* It may be seen in his *Traite de l'Office Divin* how sharply Collet replies to those ecclesiastics who complain of having to repeat too often the same words. He asks himself whether they will be able to sing with the elect the eternal *Sanctus*. To us these complaints appear simply very thoughtless and without any consideration. We are convinced that these ecclesiastics do not on this score neglect the Daily Rosary, the Litany of Jesus and of the B. Virgin, and that they are zealous in recommending these to others.

the number of thoughts nor from the variety of expressions, but that the most simple affection suffices to occupy our heart and attach it to God, in fine, that the efficacy of our desires corresponds with their ardour, and that it is their nature to become inflamed by repetition and continuity.\* Such is the sentiment of an ecclesiastic who has the spirit of his vocation and who aspires to sanctity. If, like David, he bears deeply in his heart an intense love of the Divine Will how happy must he not be in having to express it by so many protestations? † and if he has not yet this love to the degree he desires, if he mourns to find his heart so cold and his will so weak, must he not find a consolation in the facility offered to him to increase his ardour by his very mourn-

\* "Very often," says a commentator upon the prayer of our Saviour in His agony, "we think, like the heathens, that a multiplication of our prayers render them more effectual, that we shall persuade God by our reasons, that we shall touch Him by a lively representation of our wants. Our long discourses teach Him nothing. Our reasonings and reflections affect Him but little. He asks only that we should be affected ourselves, that our heart should melt and flow out before Him, that our desires should be fervent, our will sustained, that we should be full of confidence in His mercy, yet profoundly penetrated with the conviction of our own unworthiness. When this is the case we may pray a long time without falling into the error of those *great talkers* condemned in the Gospel. These few words will suffice us. Then a single word repeated with great sentiments may obtain everything."—Duguet, *Traite de la Croix*, t. vi. p. 301. F. Lami, combating Duguet upon another point, confirms his opinion upon this one. According to him the heart is not so made as to change as frequently its sentiments as the imagination can its ideas. Further, that a sentiment may be able to penetrate the soul and effect a change in it, it is necessary for it to dwell there, that it should also have time to gain it and operate in it. "It is almost the same with the sacred passions as with the profane. They are daughters of habit. We must give them time to form such habit with the heart."—*Reflexions sur la Traite de la priere publique*.

† "Love has but one word, and in always saying it it never repeats it."—P. Lacordaire, *S. Dominique*.

ings and to realise his desires by giving to their expression all the energy and vivacity belonging to them.

Not but that, in our opinion, many ecclesiastics may find a risk in this so frequent repetition, and may need precaution and vigilance in order to avoid laxity.\* It is important here, on the contrary, to apply with particular care the general advice which we have given in the first part of this work. Before all it is necessary to understand the sense of the psalm and to become well penetrated with it. To attain this we should study patiently and deeply each verse, read from time to time, and again, a good commentary upon it, collect the most appropriate remarks of the saints and doctors, join thereto the good ideas and sentiments which we may receive from above, compare together the different forms which the psalmist gives to his thought, meditate in prayer those words in which we find the most light and relish, determine beforehand the intentions to be had in the recitation, the pauses to be made, the practices to be observed, in fine, to rest a moment every morning before the *Sacrosanctæ* to examine with what care we have discharged our duty as to this part of the Office. All these hints have their use ; there is not an experienced and pious ecclesiastic but would admit their importance.

Penetrated with these sentiments, liturgical authors have multiplied remarks upon all that concerns the Little Hours. They point out what is suitable, the reasons, and pious meanings, down even to the division of the psalm. They remark that the Church has di-

\* “ Quiescant a dictando ingenia, labia a confabulando, a scribendo digiti, a discurrendo nuntii : non autem quiescant corda die ac nocte meditari in lege Domini quæ est caritas.”—S. Bern., *Ep.* xc.

vided the psalmody in each of the Hours into three equal parts to answer to the three hours of the day according to the old reckoning in order to cause us to think of the three theological virtues, the harmony of which forms the essence of the Divine worship, or rather, perhaps, to recall the idea of the Three Divine Persons whom we ought to glorify unceasingly in time as in eternity.\* The Office of the day, or the Little Hours, is, in their opinion, the expression of the Christian life, which is an initiation into that of heaven. It was fitting therefore that the day should have but one psalm as eternity has but one song. Further, it was proper that this psalm should be divided into four hours, to represent the universality of the Church that prays. But what shows, in the Office, the intention to honour the Blessed Trinity is, that these four ecclesiastical hours succeed each other at a distance of three hours, and that each of them comprises three psalms, or rather continues the same psalm but dividing it into three, in such a manner that every three hours there is an Hour of the Breviary representing these three hours of the day, and comprising three psalms which yet only form one, as the Three Divine Persons are but one God. Thus the Church testifies Her desire to see us honour continually the August Trinity for all Christians who are consecrated to it. Accordingly She invites us to a more and more strict union with the Three Divine Persons, following the wish of the Apostle: *Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et caritas Dei, et communicatio Sancti Spiritus*

\* M. Olier well illustrates this last intention. *Ecrits sur la S. Vierge*, p. 175. *Des mystères de notre Seigneur appliqués à la journée*, v.



*sit cum omnibus vobis.\** Other liturgists remark again that this psalm which, from its very commencement, raises up our thoughts to true happiness, and never ceases to recommend to us good works as the means of obtaining it, proceeds by octonaries or strophes of eight verses, corresponding to the Evangelical beatitudes, and that each section of the psalm, terminated by the doxology, is composed of sixteen verses corresponding in number to that of the works of mercy which the Divine Law prescribes, and which Our Lord will reward at the last day.

Perhaps it would be a good plan to separate by some mark these Octonaries in the Breviary as is done in the Bible. We find in the Life of Lessius that marks of this kind were in his Diurnal. They served him as stop-points to moderate his natural ardour or as signals to reanimate his vigilance and renew his intentions.†

It will be well also to remark the various names by which the psalmist designates the Divine Will, the wonderful effects which he attributes to it, and the sentiments with which it inspires him.

I. The terms he uses to express it are numerous, and each of them whilst representing the same object to the mind causes it to be surveyed under a special aspect so as to illustrate some particular point. It is successively a *word*, a *law*, a *precept*, a *testimony*, a *career*, a *path*; in the works of commentators the precise meaning and difference of all these expressions may be found.‡

\* II. Cor. xiii. 13.

† *De Vita et moribus R. P. Leonardi Lessii*, x., No. 48, 18°; 1644.

‡ "Quidquid Deus præcipit *via* dicitur quia fit norma vivendi; *semita*, quia recta ad Deum ducet et incipientibus arcta videtur; *testimonium*, quia bonorum

II. As to the effects which the Law produces in faithful souls, the Psalmist notices three principal ones.

1. It protects innocence and preserves from sin.—“Beati immaculati in via, qui ambulant in lege Domini! In quo corrigit adolescentior viam suam? Fiat cor meum immaculatum in justificationibus Tuis. Nisi quod lex Tua meditatio mea est, tunc forte periissem.” . . . .

2. It gives true wisdom to the soul.—“Super inimicos meos prudentem me fecisti mandato Tuo . . . Super senes intellexi, quia mandata Tua quæsi . . . Lucerna pedibus meis verbum Tuum . . . Declaratio sermonum Tuorum illuminat, et intellectum dat parvulis.”

3. It excites us to fervour by the consolations which we taste through it.—“Ambulabam in latitudine, quia mandata Tua exquisivi . . . . Hæc me consolata est in humilitate mea . . . . In æternum non obliviscar justificationes Tuas, quia in ipsis vivificasti me . . . . Ignitum eloquium Tuum vehementer, et servus Tuus dilexit illud, &c.”

III. To these praises the Psalmist adds the expression of most lively and touching sentiments.

Happy, he says, are they who have no other rule, no other love, but this Divine Law.—“Beati immaculati

malorumque operum testis est, aut, potius quia Dei voluntatem hominibus testam facit; *lex*, quia homines ligat, sicut *præceptum*, dicitur, quia per se Deus tulerit; *eloquium*, *sermo*, verbum, quia per Filium a Patre emanarit; *judicium* quia continet regulam unde judicandi sumus; *justitia et æquitas*: unicuique tribuet quod suum est; *veritas*, quia ab illo est qui falli nequit nec fallere, *justificatio*, quia imperat illa per quæ justificamur.”—D. P. Loycx, in *Argumenti psalmi: Beati immaculati*.

in via . . . . Beati qui scrutantur testimonia Tua ;  
in toto corde exquirunt Eum !”

As for me, declares the Psalmist, I can say it forms the comfort and delight of my heart.—“Memor fui iudiciorum Tuorum, Domine, et consolatus sum . . . . Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes Tuæ in loco peregrinationis meæ . . . . Portio mea, Domine, custodire legem Tuam . . . . Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes, sed non ut lex Tua . . . . Hæreditate acquisivi testimonia Tua in æternum, quia exultatio cordis mei sunt . . . . Eructabunt labia mea hymnum, cum docueris me justificationes Tuas, &c.”

I esteem this Divine law incomparably more than all the treasures in the world.—“In via testimoniorum Tuorum delectatus sum sicut in omnibus divitiis . . . . Bonum mihi lex oris Tui super millia auri et argenti . . . . Lætabor ego super eloquia Tua, sicut qui invenit spolia . . . . Quam dilecta faucibus meis eloquia Tua.”

It is ever present to my mind and to my heart.—“Testimonia Tua meditatio mea est . . . Et meditabar in mandatis Tuis quæ dilexi . . . . Coagulatum est sicut lac cor eorum ; ego vero legem Tuam meditatus sum . . . . Quomodo dilexi legem Tuam ! tota die meditatio mea est . . . . Super omnes docentes me intellexi, quia testimonia Tua meditatio mea est . . . . Prevenerunt oculi mei ad Te diluculo, ut meditarer eloquia Tua.”

I try the depths of these Divine commandments ; I set myself to discover their meaning, their extent, and their motives.—“Ego autem in toto corde meo scrutabor mandata Tua . . . . Declinate a me maligni, et

scrutabor mandata Dei mei . . . . Mirabilia testimonia Tua ; ideo scrutata est ea anima mea.”

My most ardent desire is to observe them faithfully.—“Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificationes Tuas in omni tempore . . . . Viam veritatis elegi . . . . Da mihi intellectum et scrutabor legem Tuam et custodiam illam in toto corde meo . . . . Deduc me in semitam mandatorum Tuorum quia ipsam volui . . . . Juravi et statui custodire judicia justitiæ Tuæ. Gressus meos dirige secundum eloquium Tuum, et non dominetur mei omnis injustitiæ.” . . . .

My delight would be to see them everywhere revered.—“Particeps ego sum omnium timentium Te et custodientium mandata Tua . . . . Exitus aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei, quia non custodierunt legem Tuam . . . . Tabescere me fecit Zelus meus.”\*

These remarks may perhaps appear minute. We think however that we ought not to omit them, because if we judge from experience they are not without utility, and likewise when it is a question of so important and holy an act as prayer, which must be daily recited and should exercise a profound influence upon our whole life, the smallest helps acquire considerable value.

For the same reason we again recommend the thorough study of this psalm by means of the best in-

\* Although these affections pass and succeed one another they do not fail to produce a desirable effect upon us. As each wave of a stream as it passes washes him who is bathing therein and contributes to restore to him his natural fairness, so likewise, says Alvarez, each one of these holy affections contributes to the purification of our souls and gives them an all celestial beauty. *Jam vos mundi estis propter sermonem quem locutus sum vobis*, said our Saviour to His Apostles.—*Joan. xv. 3 ; Cf. Alv. de Paz. Op. Spirit, t. iii., de oratio ne vocale. p. 11, xv., sub fin.*

interpreters and the return from time to time to this study. We may consult the most extensive works upon the Psalter, as the *Explanatio in Psalmos* of Bellarmine, the *Reflexions Spirituelles sur les psaumes* of P. Berthier. It would be well even to add some more weighty work, for example, the *Expositio in Psalmum, cxviii.*, of S. Ambrose (22 Discourses); the *Enarrationes* of S. Augustine upon the same psalm (32 Instructions); the pious commentary of Fr. Aquaviva under this title, *Cl. Aquavivæ Præpositi generalis Societatis Jesu, meditationes in psalmum cxviii.*;\* likewise that of Dr. P. Loycx entitled, *In psalmum Beati immaculati, etc., reliquorum omnium vere principem, commentaria moralia, fl<sup>o</sup> 1643.*† But what must be chiefly sought in these readings is less the value of each word than the general sense of the psalm, the spirit that animated the psalmist, the collection of thoughts and sentiments that dictated it to him.

\* An incomplete posthumous work. It was printed at Rome in 1616 with meditations upon Ps. xlv. *Eructavit* of the same author. F. Aquaviva was as recommendable for his piety as he was illustrious for his knowledge. Elsewhere we have quoted one of his letters to the fathers of his Society recommending to their devotion the recitation of the Divine Office.

† We may add an opusculum under this title, *Encheridion Horarum*, lately published by M. l'Abbe Tournel of the French Chapel, London, in which may be found a very exact and pious commentary upon psalm cxviii. in 32°, Laroche, 1866. Two other works, well known, may here be noted: 1. *Les heures canonicales contenues dans le commentaire du psaume cxviii., tiré des Saints Peres*; 12°, Paris, 1672. 2. *Les Gémissements d'un cœur chrétien exprimés dans le psaume cxviii.*, 12°, first published in Latin under the title, *Agræ animæ et dolorem suum lenire conantis pia in psalmum cxviii., Soliloquæ*, 1684. But we can scarcely recommend it for reading on account of its Jansenist leanings which are noticeable in several passages. On the other hand these books have all the characters that M. de Maistre assigns to the religious productions of Port Royal—the *polish, hardness and coldness of ice* (*Eglise gallicane, ch. v.*). The first is attributed to Le Maistre de Lacy, the second to Hamon, devoted and well known adepts.

It is specially by meditation and prayer on the Psalm that we may become penetrated with it. Happy he who attains to the same spirit and heart with David, or rather with our Saviour, the Son of God, of whom David was the figure. Submitting to the same principle, obeying the same movement, he has no difficulty in hearing his language nor in uniting with his prayers, and he sees in the obligation with which the Church charges him a means of each day drawing closer a union which constitutes his happiness and perfection—*Beati immaculati . . . Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam*.\*

\* *Matt. v. 6.*



## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE HOUR OF PRIME.

#### § I.

AFTER our remarks upon the cxviii. Psalm and of the Hours considered as a whole, only a few observations remain to be made upon each of them in particular.

They all open with the same prelude ; it is a simple and pious hymn\* indicating the time of day at which the Hour should be recited, the homage that should be offered to God, and the graces it behoves us to ask from Him. The form of this poetry bears the impression of S. Ambrose and recalls his maxim—*Negligere verba, pensare mysteria.*

No sooner does the sun appear upon the horizon than our eyes turn towards it ; but our thoughts should go still higher—even to Him of whom it is an image—even to the true Source of all light, of all brightness, and of all fruitfulness. The holy doctor invites us to turn to God at day-break, to offer Him our worship and to implore His grace. He warns us of the obligation we are under to moderate our discourse, to watch over our eyes, and to mortify all our senses. Then, reminding us of

\* A succession of Strophes of four iambic verses in which a frequent consonance affects a sort of rhyme as in the poetry of our modern languages.

time's rapid flight he tells us that our career is brief, and that they only can rejoice at its end who shall have passed it unspotted.

If it please us to represent Our Lord under a particular aspect at this period of the day, that we may the better unite ourselves to the dispositions which animated Him, we may consider Him in the visits He made to the Temple, according to S. John, at the first dawning of the sun : *Et diluculo venit in templum* ;\* or else in the prison of the high priest on the morning of His Passion, when He offered Himself to the Eternal Father to undergo the sentence of death they were preparing against Him. *Mane facto, consilium inierunt ut Jesum morti traderent* ;† or, again, on the sea shore when appearing to His Apostles after His Resurrection He manifested His presence by the wonderful blessing He bestowed upon their labours : *Mane autem facto . . . dixit eis ; Mitte in dexteram.*‡ But it seems, perhaps, more natural and more simple to consider Him at the moment of His birth or at His entry into the world when, protesting His devotedness to His Father, He promised to be obedient to His Will even unto death.§

Such was the practice of a pious servant of God, an ecclesiastic of the 17th century, whose life has been written and who, without naming himself, has revealed the first of his daily exercises. "Every morning his first care was to adore the beginning of our Saviour's life in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. Then commencing the Office he did two things : 1. In honour of the devotion with which this Divine Saviour offered Himself to

\* *Joan. viii. 2.*    † *Matth. xxvii. 1.*    ‡ *Joan. xxi. 4.*    § *Hebr. x. 5.*

His Father to be immolated to His glory, and to redeem mankind by the Sacrifice of the Cross, he offered himself to God with a like intention, and pronounced with all his heart, in union with Jesus Christ, these words of the first Psalms of Prime: *Voluntarie sacrificabo Tibi et confitebor nomini Tuo, Domine, quoniam bonum est.*

2. In honour of the unutterable love with which Jesus gave Himself to His Father to do His Will on earth, protesting that he embraced this holy Law and ever carried it in his inmost heart — *in medio cordis*.\* This priest tried to recite with all possible devotion the psalm *Beati immaculati*, each verse of which is an eulogium upon the will of God, and a protestation of fidelity to His Law. It seems, adds the Author, from whom we borrow this passage,† that we could not bring any better dispositions to this Office of the morning, and that this practice is founded upon the most solid principles and most affecting conceptions.”

The first Psalm of Prime of which we have spoken is the liii.: *Deus in nomine Tuo saluum me fac.* It tells us that all the servants of God are surrounded with enemies on earth; that our life must be like that of our Master, a series of trials and conflicts; and that we have no support in them but from Divine Grace; but at the same time it reminds us that this help is assured to all who invoke it, and that if we cease not to trust in the Lord He will never cease to defend us and enable us to triumph.

\* *Ps. xxxix. 9.*

† De Lantages, founder of the seminary of Puy, *Instructions ecclésiastiques, tit. iv. du Sous-Diaconat, c. iv.*

Next, except in the Sunday and Ferial Office, we begin the cxviii. Psalm. From this very beginning of the first section, the Holy Ghost teaches us where we must seek that true happiness for which we were made, and of which our heart feels so much the want—*Beati immaculati!* There is nothing more touching than these first verses, especially for priests and clergy to whom they are particularly applicable. In the second section the Psalmist alludes to the difficulties that may be met with in fulfilling the Divine Will, and he invites the aid of heaven in order to surmount them.

The Little Chapter that follows the psalmody is admirable for its majesty, elevation, and simplicity. In other respects also it is suitable to the hour of the day. Each morning being for us as the beginning of a new life, it engages us to renew our consecration to the Lord, and to beseech His help that we may answer to His designs. There is nothing grander than this image of the *Immortal King of Ages* presiding unchangeably from the height of His eternity over the rapid course of our days and years. Nothing can be more sublime than this cry of the Apostle's heart when he claims for this Sovereign Being *all honour and glory* and who aspires to pay Him such *for ever and ever*.

The prayers by which this Hour ends are inspired by the same sentiment and tend to the same end. It would be difficult to express a purer intention or to invoke in a more touching manner the grace of Heaven.

## § II. AT PRIME.

*Dicitur.* Pater, Ave, Credo,      The Symbol was recited at  
Deus in adjutorium, etc.      the beginning of the Office ; it

is repeated at Prime, from the beginning of the day : *Quia fides est humanæ salutis initium fundamentum et radix omnes justificationis, sine qua impossibile est placere Deo.*—Conc. Trid.

*Hymn. S. Ambr.*

Iam lucis orto sidere  
Deum precemur supplices  
Ut in diurnis actibus  
Nos servet a nocentibus.

Allusion to *Orto Jam sole*, Marc. xvi. *Oportet prævenire solem ad benedictionem.*—Sap. xvi. It is fitting to consecrate to God all our first fruits, and it is natural that the sight of the sun should raise our thoughts heavenward to the Author of all light and life—*et nocentibus.* These enemies are God's : the world, the flesh, and the devil—*Dominus illuminatio mea : quem timebo, dum appropriant super me nocentes ?*—Ps. xxvi.

Linguam refrænans temperet  
Ne litis horror insonet ;  
Visum fovendo contegat,  
Ne vanitates haureat.

The senses most difficult to watch, and which give most access to sin, are sight and speech. So David prayed the Lord to guard them for him : *Pone Domine custodiam ori meo. Averte oculos meos, ne videant vanitatem.*—Ps. cxi.-cxviii. *Fovendo : protegendo.*

Sint pura cordis intima  
Absistat et vecordia  
Carnis terat superbiam  
Potus cibique parcitas.

Ut cum dies abcesserit,  
Noctemque sors reduxerit,  
Mundi per abstinentiam  
Ipsi canamus gloriam.

Deo Patri sit gloria,  
Ejusque soli Filio  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,  
Nunc et per omne sæculum.  
Amen.

*Intima.* It is of little avail to avoid only external sins; we ask to be preserved from every sin of thought, from every voluntary act of concupiscence—*Vecordia*; as cowardice, folly; *Sine corde*—*Cibi parcitas*; sobriety, guardian of purity: *Nunquam novi castum nisi sobrium.*—S. Jerome.

*Sors*; constant order, course of things, law of nature. *Mundi*; pure, spotless. What the Church asks here for the day She will again beg in the evening for the night. *Per abstinentiam*; thanks to mortification. *Religio munda et immaculata . . . immaculatum se custodire ab hoc sæculo.*—S. Jac. i.

Hincmar attributes this doxology and that of the following Hymns to S. Ambrose; but the accuracy of this is disputed.

### *Psalm LIII.*

Our Lord, as a sign set up to be contradicted, implores help from His Father for Himself and His members.

1. Deus, in nomine Tuo  
salvum me fac, et in virtute  
Tua judica me.

1. *Salvum me fac*: Salvation is the one thing necessary: let us think of this on waking and



2. Deus, exaudi orationem meam : auribus percipe verba oris mei.

3. Quoniam alieni insurrexerunt adversum me, et fortes quæsierunt animam meam, et non proposuerunt Deum ante conspectum suum.

4. Ecce enim Deus adjuvat me, et Dominus susceptor est animæ meæ.

5. Averte mala inimicis meis, et in veritate Tua disperde illos.

6. Voluntarie sacrificabo Tibi et confitebor nomini Tuo, Domine, quoniam bonum est.

desire nothing else—*Judica me*: Proclaim my innocence: give me a verdict against my enemies.

2. If we desire that God should hear our prayers let us ourselves be attentive to them. *Satagentis, solliciti in tribulatione positi verba sunt ista.*—S. Aug.

3. *Strangers* are the worldlings who make this earth their country. *They who pursue souls* are the demons. Both turn away their faces from God.

4. *Ecce enim.* God is nigh, His help sure for him who puts his trust in Him, *Fidelis est Deus.*—I. Cor. x.

5. *Averte*: Cause their evil deeds to be visited upon themselves. *In veritate Tua*: According to Thy promises which never deceive.

6. The first daily sacrifice to offer is prayer: *Hostiam laudis.*—Ps. cxv. *Voluntarie: corde magno et animo volenti.*—II. Mac. i. *Non enim verba quærit a te Deus, sed cor.*—S. Aug. *Quoniam bonum est: Nomen Tuum*; because God is good to us and because He is Goodness itself.

7. Quoniam ex omni tribulatione eripuisti me, et super inimicos meos despexit oculus meus.

7. We should praise God above all things, because He has delivered us through Jesus Christ from the slavery of the devil.

### *Psalm CXVIII.*

Our Lord declares to His Father the admiration and love with which His Law inspires Him, and He asks for His members grace to observe it.

#### *Aleph and Beth.*

I.—1. Beati immaculati in via qui ambulant in lege Domini.

2. Beati qui scrutantur testimonia Ejus, in toto corde exquirunt Eum.

3. Non enim qui operantur iniquitatem, in viis Ejus ambulaverunt.

1. *Beati*: Fundamental maxim. *Tanquam diceret: Beatitudinem quæris; si ergo velis esse beatus, esto immaculatus.*—Amalar. *Immaculati*: It is but little to appear such, we must be so in very truth. *In via*: Life is a journey; it should have a direction and a destination. *Qui ambulant: non qui stant, aut sedent, aut jacent.*

2. *Scrutantur: investigant.* *In toto corde*: To find God in His Word we must seek Him with all our heart.

3. *Non enim*: By their works we know the just man. *Non enim qui dicit mihi Domine, Domine . . . sed qui facit voluntatem Patris Mei.*—Matt. vii.

4. Tu mandasti mandata  
Tua custodiri nimis.

4. Here Our Lord begins to speak to His Father. *Tu mandasti* : When God speaks, He is to be obeyed. *Mandasti mandata* : Thou hast imposed obedience upon us. *Nimis* : *diligentissime*.

5. Utinam dirigantur viæ  
meæ ad custodiendas justifi-  
cationes Tuas.\*

5. An upright man has only one end in view,—he seeks only the right path. *Utinam* : How many motives have we of inclining to God with all our strength ?

6. Tunc non confundar  
cum perspexero in omnibus  
mandatis Tuis.

6. *In omnibus* : To what purpose shall we have kept some of the commandments if we have not observed all the others ?—Jac. ii.

7. Confitebor Tibi in di-  
rectione cordis in eo quod  
didici judicia justitiæ Tuæ.

7. *In directione ; in rectitudine* : God loves *the upright of heart* ; their prayers are sincere and their works without fault. *In eo quod : pro eo quod* : When we know how to appreciate the commandments of the Lord, we have no other anxiety but to keep them well.

8. Justificationes Tuas cus-  
todiam ; non me derelinquas  
usquequaque.

8. *Non me derelinquas* : Let us always found our resolutions on Divine Grace. *Usquequaque* : Entirely without return—

\* S. Pius V. took this verse for his motto, and had it engraved upon his seal.—*Vie*, par le P. Feuillet Domin., l. v. c. i.

II. — 9. In quo corrigit adolescentior viam suam? in custodiendo sermones Tuos.

10. In toto corde meo exquisivi Te, ne repellas me a mandatis Tuis.

11. In corde meo abscondi eloquia Tua ut non peccem Tibi.

12. Benedictus es, Domine! doce me justificationes Tuas.

13. In labiis meis pronuntiavi omnia judicia oris Tui.

*Non deserit Deus, nisi deseratur.*

9. *Adolescentior: Sensus hominis ad malum proni sunt ab adolescentia sua.*—Gen. viii. Years do not remedy this natural weakness: *Est puer centum annorum et peccator centum annorum.*—Is. lxxv.

10. Remark these words which often recur: *Toto corde.* We are sure of finding God when we seek Him with our whole heart. *Eum qui venit ad Me non ejiciam foras.*—Joan. vi.

11. *Abscondi: Ut thesaurum, vel ut semen.* To hide the word of God in our heart is to meditate on it, relish it, and become imbued with it. *Ut non peccem Tibi. Quomodo possum peccare in Dominum?*—Gen. xxxix.

12. Let us bless God for the past and pray Him for the future. *Doce me justificationes:* Without the science of His Laws we are blind; possessing it we are sufficiently learned.

13. *Nuntiavi:* Love for the Law makes us zealous in recommending the practice of it. *Væ mihi, si non evangelizavero!*—I. Cor. ix. *Oris tui, os Dei, Christus.*—Heb. i.

14. In via testimoniorum  
Tuorum delectatus sum sicut  
in omnibus divitiis.

15. In mandatis Tuis ex-  
ercebor et considerabo vias  
Tuas.

16. In justificationibus  
Tuis meditabor ; non oblivis-  
car sermones Tuos.

14. *Delectatus sum* : The  
Law of God known and prac-  
tised is more than a treasure ;  
it is the beginning of bliss.

15. We must practise the  
Law of God if we would  
understand it : *Exercebor et  
considerabo, cœpit Jesus facere.*  
—Act i.

16. *In justificationibus* : The  
end and fruit of the Law of God  
is to make us just. *Meditabor et  
non obliviscar* : the fruit of Medi-  
tation is to preserve the remem-  
brance of Divine truths.

### *Ghimel and Daleth.*

III.—17. Retribue servo  
Tuo, vivifica me et custodiam  
sermones Tuos.

18. Revela oculos meos, et  
considerabo mirabilia de lege  
Tua.

19. Incola ego sum in  
terra ; non abscondas a me  
mandata Tua.

20. Concupivit anima mea  
desiderare justificationes Tuas

17. *Retribue* : In return grant  
me this grace. *Vivifica me* : Be  
Thou my Life. *Et custodiam* :  
On this condition by Thy help  
I will observe Thy command-  
ments.

18. *Revela* : Be also my Light.  
It is God Who gives understand-  
ing ; and on what can we more  
worthily employ it than in me-  
ditating upon His Law ?

19. Life is a journey, of  
which heaven is the end. The  
Law of God shows us the right  
way.

20. *Concupivit desiderare.*  
Nothing more just ; the more

in omni tempore.

21. Increpasti superbos ; maledicti qui declinant a mandatis Tuis.

22. Aufer a me opprobrium et contemptum quia testimonia Tua exquisivi.

23. Etenim sederunt principes et adversum me loquebantur ; servus autem Tuus exercebatur in justificationibus Tuis.

24. Non et testimonia Tua meditatio mea est et consilium meum justificationis Tuæ.

IV.—25. Adhæsit pavimento anima mea ; vivifica me secundum verbum Tuum.\*

we love God the more we desire to love Him.

21. Pride refuses to obey ; accordingly it is to the proud that it shall be said : *Ite, maledicti . . . Maledictus omnis qui non permanet in verbis legis.* —Deut. xxvii.

22. True opprobrium is that which is eternal, into which the wicked are plunged. *Ibunt in opprobrium, ut videant semper.* —Dan. xii.

23. *Adversum me.* This word is applicable to our Saviour as well as to His members. *Consilium inierunt adversus Jesum.* —Matth. xxvii. *Servus autem :* The fear of God removes all other fear ; the ignominies endured by Our Lord console us for all the injustices of men.

24. When we love God alone we think only of pleasing Him, and desire no other counsels but His.

25. The sighs of a soul that feels its misery, and that looks for all her consolation from heaven.

\* The barbarians having seized upon Rheims about 407, S. Nicasius, bishop of the town, took refuge in the church, and remained prostrate before the altar. A soldier having discovered him cut off his head at the moment he pronounced these words : *Adhæsit pavimento ;* and it is said his lips finished the verse, *vivifica me*, etc., though the head was already separated from the trunk. — Vincent de Beaur, *Histoire*, l. xxi. c. xxxviii.



Some apply this verse to Our Lord in the tomb waiting His Resurrection.

26. Vias meas enuntiavi et exaudisti me et exercebor in mirabilibus Tuis.

26. *Enuntiavi; declaravi, confessus sum.* There must be no dissimulation with God; we must confess our wrong if we wish for pardon.

27. Viam justificationum Tuarum instrue me et exercebor in mirabilibus Tuis

27. Jesus Christ is the true joy—the way of justice; what wonders, what fine examples in His virtues and mysteries!

28. Dormitavit anima mea præ tædio; confirma me in verbis Tuis.

28. *Anima mea; persona mea.* The soul becomes torpid if God ceases to speak to it; good thoughts awaken it.

29. Viam iniquitatis amove a me et de lege Tua miserere mei.

29. Two roads lie before us: that of sin and that of fidelity to God. Woe to him who takes the bad road! *Miserere mei; ignosce delictis meis*; or, *Misericorditer fac per legem ambulare.*

30. Viam veritatis elegi, judicia Tua non sum oblitus.

30. *Elegi*: It is not enough to have taken the better part; we must persevere in it. *Non sum oblitus*: Is such forgetfulness possible for a priest?

31. Adhæsi testimoniis Tuis, Domine; noli me confundere.

31. Charity unites to God, and attaches us to His laws. God confounds those who trust in themselves.

32. Viam mandatorum Tuarum cucurri cum dilatasti cor meum.

32. Our soul is a vessel which the wind of heaven propels. If we wish to advance

we must open our heart to the  
breath of the Divine Spirit.

*The Little Chapter.*

In the Office of the day there are no long lessons or long extracts from the sacred books, but only little chapters or short reflections destined rather to recall than to expound Christian maxims. This is because the day is devoted to active life, says a writer, and because having been engaged during the stillness of night in the contemplation of the revealed truths we need some leisure to reduce them to practice. We find in Merati another telling remark upon this Little Chapter of the Little Hours. *Quærit Hugo a S. Victore cur in Capitulis tacetur auctor, in Missa vero pronuntiatur Respondet.* “*Ad missam convenire quoque bubulculos nesciunt de auctore nisi doceantur ; ad Horas autem clerici conveniunt qui bene norunt auctores lectionum.*”\* *Utinam sit vera responsio et clerus minime ignoret ?*† Perhaps it may suffice to say that the Little Chapters being ordinarily fragments of the Epistle of the day, ecclesiastics have already seen, or should see, at Mass, from what book they are taken. This is one of the links connecting the Breviary with the Missal, and the sacrifice of the lips with that of the altar. Let us remark, to avoid all mistakes, that at Mass the *Book of Wisdom* has a more extended sense than in the Bible. Besides the *Book of Wisdom*, properly so-called, it comprises Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of canticles, Ecclesiasticus, in fine, all the Sapiential books except the psalms.

\* *L. II. de Off. c. iii.*    † *Thes. rit., t. ii. sec. v. c. xii.*

Regi sæculorum, Immortali  
et Invisibili, Soli Deo honor  
et gloria in sæcula sæculo-  
rum. Amen.

R7. Deo gratias.

R7. *Br.* Christe, [Fili] Dei  
vivi, miserere nobis.

Christe, Fili Dei, miserere  
nobis.

R7. Qui sedes etc.

This is an apostolic senti-  
ment (I. Tim. i.)—a model of  
purity of intention offered to  
the priest from early dawn,  
*Regi, Immortali.* From the  
height of His eternity as from  
an immovable rock God be-  
holds the flowing torrent of  
ages. Each day comes forth  
from nothing there to return;  
let each day offer homage to  
the Infinite Being Who pro-  
duced it, and Who remains for-  
ever. . . . *Quis tenebit cor  
hominis ut paululum stet et  
paululum . . . . respiciat  
splendorem semper stantis æterni-  
tatis, et comparet cum temporibus  
numquamstantibus; et videat esse  
incomparabilem!*—S. Aug. *Conf.*

We should ever return thanks  
that we may obtain grace.—  
Ephes. v.

Confession of S. Peter united  
to the prayer of the blind man  
of the Gospel.—Matt. xvi.-xx.  
We should enter into the senti-  
ments of both. *Esto in valle  
humilitatis ut in monte sancto  
exaudire merearis.*—Flug. a S.  
Vict.

*Turba increpabat eos ut tace-  
rent at illi magis clamabant;  
Miserere nostri.*—Matt. xx.

℣. Exsurge, Christe, adjuva nos.

℞. Et libera nos propter nomen Tuum.

Dominus vobiscum.\*

Et cum spiritu tuo.

Oremus. Domine Deus omnipotens Qui ad principium hujus diei nos pervenire fecisti, Tua nos hodie salva virtute ut ad nullum declinemus peccatum sed semper ad Tuam justitiam faciendam nostra procedant eloquia, dirigantur cogitationes et opera. Per Dominum.

Ps. xliii. fin. We ask God's help to triumph over evil, *i.e.*, sin the only obstacle to salvation. *Propter nomen Tuum*: We should regard the interests of God more than our own in the graces we ask of Him.

Ruth ii. May the Lord be with you by His Spirit and His grace. We can do or obtain nothing but with and through Him.—Joan. xv.

The same wish. But to the priest we speak only of his spirit to show that he fulfils a spiritual office in which the flesh should have no share. Also the salutation of S. Paul to Timothy: *Dominus sit cum spiritu tuo*.—II. iv.

*Hodie salva*. Daily must God save us, for daily we rush to our ruin—*Ut ad nullum declinemus*. A thought of the preceding psalm: *Utinam dirigantur viæ meæ! ad Tuam justitiam faciendam*. The sole condition of our happiness; it is the great grace to obtain from heaven—*Eloquia . . . Opera*. Every

\* Upon the *Dominus vobiscum* may be consulted the *Opusculum XI*. of S. P. Damian, and another *De salutatione Sacerdotis*, by Aug. Rocca.

thing in us ought to tend to our end—the fulfilling of the Divine Will.

### MARTYROLOGY.

*V.* Pretiosa in conspectu Domini. *R.* Mors sanctorum ejus.

Sancta Maria et omnes Sancti intercedant pro nobis ad Dominum ut nos mereamur ab Eo adjuvari et salvari, Qui vivit et regnat.

*Dicitur ter.* Deus in adiutorium meum intende; Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.

Allusion to the Martyrology which is here read in the choir.\* In exchange for a temporal life sacrificed to His Glory, God gives His saints a life with glory and happiness without limits.—Ps. cxv.

This a very ancient prayer—very just distinctions are noted; the saints pray in favour of us; the Blessed Virgin also intercedes for us but in a rank apart as their Queen. Our Lord helps us and sanctifies us—*Ab Eo Qui vivit et regnat!*  
. . . Words that correspond to *Regi sæculorum, etc.*

*Ter*: Expression of a great longing, indication of an urgent want. *Ter Dominum rogavi.*—II. Cor. x. They recall to our mind Jesus Christ in the Garden of Olives: *Oravit tertio eundem sermonem dicens.*—Matth. xxvi. They answer to

\* A custom established as far back as the 8th century, and which S. Chrodegangus, bishop of Metz, made a rule for his Canons-regular, 762.—See Grancolas, *de L'Office Divin*.

Kyrie, eleison ; Christe, eleison ; Kyrie, eleison—  
Pater Noster.

℣. Respice in servos Tuos, Domine, et in opera Tua, et dirige filios eorum.

℞. Et sit splendor Domini Dei nostri super nos, et opera manuum nostrarum dirige super nos, et opus manuum nostrarum dirige. Gloria, etc.

Oremus. Dirigere et sanctificare, regere et gubernare dignare, Domine Deus, Rex cœli et terræ, hodie corda et corpora nostra, sensus, sermones et actus nostros in lege Tua et in operibus mandatorum Tuorum : ut hic et in æternum, Te auxiliante, salvi et liberi esse merea-

the three great enemies we have to contend with : the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Invocation of the three divine persons.

Ps. lxxxix., last verse. Cast Thine eyes upon Thy servants, direct them and their families—*Filios eorum*. But the Church has rather in view a spiritual sense : Direct all their acts, all their wills—*In opera Tua* : They are Thy creatures, this is why their works even belong to Thee : *Omnia enim opera nostra operatus es nobis*. — Isa. xxvi.

*Opera manuum* : External work considered in detail—*Opus*, in the last place because all our actions, however varied, should have but one end, and form but one whole.

*Dirigere* : Incapable of ourselves of acquiring the least merit for heaven, we require that the grace of Our Lord should prevent and accompany us in all our exterior and interior actions. *In lege Tua* : A return to Psalm cxviii. *Salvi et liberi* : The liberty of the children of God frees us



mur, salvator Mundi. Qui  
vivis . . . .

Jube. . . . Dies et actus  
nostros in Sua pace disponat  
Dominus Omnipotens.  
Amen.

*Legitur hic Capitulum  
Nonæ.*

℣. Adjutorium nostrum in  
nomine Domini. R̃. Qui fecit  
cælum et terram.

℣. Benedictio. R̃. Deus  
Dominus nos benedicat et ab  
omni malo defendat et ad  
vitam perducatur æternam. Et  
fidelium animæ per miseri-

from sin and puts us in a  
way to attain salvation. *Qua  
libertate Christus nos liberavit.*  
—Gal. iv.

*In Sua pace :* In the  
peace of Jesus Christ—not in  
that of the world—we must  
strive to become established.  
*Dies et actus :* What the Church  
is anxious for, what we ourselves  
should be solicitous about are  
the actions which we have to  
perform in the day and the in-  
tention with which we perform  
them.

Thus the first of the Little  
Hours gives us the same teach-  
ing as the last, and both con-  
clude by drawing our attention  
to the object of the feast.

The end of Psalm cxxii., which  
is again repeated after the short  
lesson of Compline. We cannot  
want for strength to fulfil the  
Law of God when we have the  
Sovereign Might Itself for our  
support. *Qui fecit cælum* an-  
swers to *Dominus Omni-po-*  
*tens.*

We begin the day at Prime,  
as we finish it at Compline, by  
asking God's blessing ; but in  
the morning we ask it that we  
may advance in the way of His

cordiam Dei requiescant in pace. Amen. virtues—*ad vitam perducatur æternam*—and in the evening to repose in peace sheltered from all attacks. *Descendat et maneat.* —*Fidelium animæ.* Let us think that one day these words will be said for us and that we know not when that day will come. —Matt. xxv.

## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE HOUR OF TIERCE.

#### § I.

THE hour of the day that corresponds to Tierce is midway between sunrise and midday. It is called *holy* by excellence in many works of the first ages,\* either because the Holy Ghost specially consecrated it to Himself by the miracle of Pentecost, or because it has long been fixed in all the churches as the hour for the oblation of the Divine Sacrifice.† It is well then to unite ourselves at this part of the Office to the Divine Victim, and to ask of God with the Apostles a large share in the Spirit of Light and love. It is with these sentiments we should recite the hymn—*Nunc Sancte nobis Spiritus*.

We do not undertake to specify the idea proper to each of the strophes that compose the cxvii. psalm.

\* Hora tertia dicitur *Sacra*. *Decret*, pars 1<sup>a</sup> Dist. xlv. *Can. ult.*

† Cum sit hora diei tertia, Act, ii. 15.—See S. Greg. *Mag. Hom. xxxvii.* Sidonius Apollin. *Epist. xvii.* ; I. V. Rupert *de Divin Office, clxxviii.* One historian relates that the Friars preachers being together in general chapter at Montpellier in the year 1247, the day of Pentecost, as they began in choir the Hour of Tierce by the *Veni Creator Spiritus* a globe of light and fire descended upon them in a visible manner and inflamed all hearts with a heavenly ardour.—*Ferdin. de Cast., t. 1, c. lxi.* S. Philip Neri was the object of a similar favour in 1544, about Whitsuntide.

Bellarmino tried it after S. Ambrose, but not very successfully. Substantially each verse offers a complete sense ; it is neither the conclusion nor the beginning of any other ; and the verses of one strophe are not more connected with each other than with those of another strophe. It is ever the same thought and same sentiment. The psalmist has only one object in view ; everything brings him back to it, or rather nothing is capable of withdrawing him from it even for a moment. *Fiat cor meum immaculatum.* (Last verse of the psalm at Tierce.)

But there is nothing to prevent ourselves from addressing ourselves specially to the Holy Ghost during this hour to beg for His gifts. This view of it adapts itself perfectly to the words as well as to the idea of the psalm. Has not the Spirit of God revealed His wishes and His will to us ? Is it not His office to make us love and practise His law ? When then we ask the knowledge, esteem, and love of this Divine law, it is this Holy Spirit we invoke, it is the same gifts bestowed upon the apostles that we beg for our soul's good. "Legem pone mihi, Domine," we say to Him, "Da mihi intellectum" ; and further on, "Os meum aperui et attraxi Spiritum". . . .

In his epistle to the Galatians S. Paul enumerates the chief effects of the Spirit of God in souls, and he opposes to them the works of the flesh, the fruits of our vicious nature : "Fructus Spiritus est caritas, gaudium, pax, patientia, benignitas, longanimitas, mansuetudo, fides, modestia, continentia, castitas". . . . Each of these words is the *resume* of some verse of the psalm, and may recall the remembrance of it.

I. CARITAS. "Legem pone mihi . . . et ex-

quiram eam semper. Portia mea, Domine, dixi custodire legem Tuam. Et meditabor in mandatis Tuis quæ dilexi nimis."

2. GAUDIUM. "Et ambulabam in latitudine quia mandata Tua exquisivi. Hæc me consolata est . . . Bonum mihi lex oris Tui."

3. PAX. "Paratus sum et non sum turbatus ut custodiam mandata Tua."

4. PATIENTIA, Longanimitas. "Multiplicata est super me iniquitas superborum ; ego autem in toto corde meo scrutabor mandata Tua—Cognovi Domine quia æquitas judicia Tua—et in veritati Tua humiliasti me."

5. BENIGNITAS, Bonitas, Mansuetudo. "Bonitatem et disciplinam et scientiam doce me. Particeps ego sum omnium timentium Te et custodientium legem Tuam. Convertantur mihi timentes Te. Et respondebo exprobrantibus mihi verbum, quia speravi in Sermonibus Tuis."

6. FIDES. "Et ne auferas de ore meo verbum veritatis usquequaque, quia in judiciis Tuis supersperavi. Et loquebar de testimoniis Tuis in conspectu regum et non confundebar."

7. MODESTIA. "Averti oculos meos ne videant vanitatem. Priusquam humiliarer, ego deliqui. Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me."

8. CONTINENTIA, Castitas. "Fiat cor meum immaculatum in justificationibus Tuis ut non confundar !"

## § II. AD TERTIAM.

*Hymn, S. Ambr.*

Nunc, Sancte nobis Spiritus      *Nunc* : Now is the holy hour ;

Unum Patri cum Filio  
Dignare promptus ingeri  
Nostro refusus pectori.

Os, lingua, mens, sensus,  
vigor  
Confessionem personent,  
Flammescat igne caritas,  
Accendat ardor proximos.

Præsta, Pater piissime,  
Patrique compar Unice  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito  
Regnans per omne Sæculum.

*Hora die tertia—Act ii. Unum Patri. Unum non unus, quia unum significat substantiæ unitatem, unius vere personarum proprietatem.—S. Bern. Refusus ; rursum infusus, caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum.—I. Cor. vi. ; Rom. v. Grammatical construction : Sancte Spiritus unum (in substantia ipsi) Patri cum Filio, dignare promptus nobis ingeri, refusus nostro, pectori (seu animæ).*

*Os, lingua, the words, mens, intelligence, thoughts ; sensus, the affections, sensibility ; vigor, all the powers of soul and body ; Caritas, the most precious fruit of the Holy Ghost ; Accendat proximos, it cannot inflame the soul without causing all around to feel its fervour ; Personent, allusion to the preaching of the Apostles ; Flammescat, to the mystery of Pentecost.*

*Præsta ; Hoc præsta Pater :*  
The hymns of the three last hours being, properly speaking, prayers and not simple exhortations like that of Prime, have a particular doxology appropriate to this end.



## CONTINUANCE OF PSALM CXVIII.

*He and Van.*

V.—33. Legem pone mihi,  
Domine, viam justificationum  
Tuarum et exquiram eam sem-  
per.

34. Da mihi intellectum,  
et scrutabor legem Tuam et  
custodiam illam in toto corde  
meo.

35. Deduc me in semitam  
mandatorum Tuorum, quia ip-  
sam volui.

36. Inclina cor meum Deus  
in testimonia Tua et non in  
avaritiam.

37. Averte oculos meos ne

33. *Legem pone mihi* : Not as  
heretofore, *in tabulis lapideis*,  
but, as becometh the reign of  
grace, *in tabulis cordis*.—II. Cor.  
iii. According to the prophecy  
of which the Apostle proclaimed  
the accomplishment : *Dabo leges  
meas in cordibus eorum*.—Hebr.  
x. *Et exquiram* : And then, on  
this condition, with this help. . .

34. *Ipse dat sapientiam sapien-  
tibus, etc.* : To what purpose do  
we study the Law if we do not  
understand it? and to what  
purpose do we understand it if  
we do not practise it?—Jac. i.

35. *Deduc me* : Necessity of  
grace. *In semitam* : Happy is  
he who loves the narrow way !  
Our Lord has marked it out,  
and He calls upon us to follow  
it.

36. *Inclina* : A precious grace  
which we cannot ask for too  
earnestly. *Adaperiat cor ves-  
trum in lege sua*, said the Jews  
of Jerusalem to their distant  
brethren : *Ut faciatis Ejus  
voluntatem corde magno et animo  
volenti*.—II. Mac. i.

37. We should particularly

videant vanitatem; in via Tua  
vivifica me.

38. Statue servo Tuo elo-  
quium Tuum in timore Tuo.

39. Amputa opprobrium  
meum quod suspicatus sum  
judicia Tua jucunda.

40. Ecce concupivi man-  
data Tua, in æquitate Tua  
vivifica me.\*

VI.—41. Et veniat super  
memisericordia Tua, Domine,  
salutare Tuum secundum elo-  
quium Tuum.

42. Et respondebo expro-

esteem purity of the eyes es-  
pecially of the soul : *Beatus vir  
cujus nomen Domini spes ejus  
et non respexit in vanitates et  
insanias falsas.*

38. *Timor Tuus in lege Tua  
me conservet* : There is a filial  
fear inseparable from love.

39. *Quod suspicatus sum ;  
quod timui* : Ignominy of sin,  
sweetness of virtue, a double  
motive for fidelity to the Law  
of God.

40. What does God demand  
of us but a sincere desire to  
keep his commandments? True  
joy, true life, is the supernatural  
life of justice and sanctity.

41. All our hope is in the  
Divine Mercy : *Omnes enim  
peccaverunt et egent gratia Dei.*  
—Rom. iii. But the Saviour  
has obtained this for us : *Veniat  
Salutare Salvator Jesus*

42. Thus should we reply

\* "To the glory of God. On this Saturday during the Octave of Corpus Christi at these words of Tierce, *in æquitate tua vivifica me*, I saw the admirable manner in which God deigns to communicate Himself as Life to Christians, living in them as in Himself, exercising in them justice, equity and the other virtues. The first Author and immediate Agent of every supernatural work, He places Himself in our actions all that is divine in them. Such a sun in the centre of a *crystal* draws from its depths the light with which He enlightens it and the heat with which He warms it. Lord, vivify thus my soul ; insinuate Thyself into us, and give us such movements as are pleasing to Thee."—Olier, *Mem., t. vi. pp. 327.*

brantibus mihi verbum quia speravi in sermonibus Tuis.

43. Et ne auferas de ore meo verbum veritatis usquequoque, quia in judiciis Tuis supersperavi.\*

44. Et custodiam legem Tuam semper in sæculum et in sæculum sæculi.

45. Et ambulabam in latitudine quia mandata Tua exquisivi.

46. Et loquebar de testimoniis Tuis in conspectu regum, et non confundebar.

47. Et meditabor in mandatis Tuis quæ dilexi.

48. Et levavi manus meas

to the raillery of the impious : *Respicite, filii, nationes hominum, et scitote quia nullus speravit in Domino et confusus est.*—Ecc. ii.

43. *Cum sacerdos, non agit bona quæ loquitur, ei etiam sermo subtrahitur, ne loqui audeat quæ non operatur ; Deus enim veritatis verbum facientibus tribuit et non facientibus tollit.*—S. Greg. Mag.

44. I love Thy Law so much that I will never cease to remain faithful to it, and will observe it so long as it shall please Thee to require it of me.

45. *In latitudine*: Nothing widens the heart so much as trust in God, and nothing gives us so much confidence as when we are able to say that we seek solely to please Him.

46. *Loquebar*: the motto of a great preacher. The Church has made it the *Introit* of the Mass of Her virgin martyrs—*Nil ei magnum cui Deus magnus est.*

47. The mind willingly dwells upon that which the heart loves.

48. *Levavi manus ad man-*

\* Baronius often repeated these words both in his work and in his conversation.

ad mandata Tua, quæ dilexi  
et exercebar in justificationi-  
bus Tuis.

*data* : To testify my admiration,  
to promise fidelity to them, to  
put them in practice. *Et ex-  
ercebar* : Meditation should  
produce love, and love should  
produce practice.

*Zain and Heth.*

VII. — 49. Memor esto  
verbi Tui servo Tuo in quo  
mihi spem dedisti.

49. *Show that Thou forgettest  
me not.* God never forgets His  
promises, but we cannot recall  
them too often.

50. Hæc me consolata est  
in humilitate mea quia elo-  
quium Tuum vivificavit me.

50. *Hæc* for *hoc* : no neuter  
in Hebrew. If the Word of  
God animated our soul as our  
soul animates our body, it  
would be our consolation and  
our strength. *Humilitas ; humi-  
liatio, abjectio.*

51. Superbi inique agebant  
usquequaque, a lege autem  
Tua non declinavi.

51. Great scandals upset the  
feeble ; they render the strong  
more humble and more firm.

52. Memor fui iudiciorum  
Tuorum a sæculo, Domine, et  
consolatus sum.

52. What more consoling  
than to find in the Scripture  
God's providence towards the  
humble and His justice on  
the wicked—*consolatus*, passive  
sense.

53. Defectio tenuit me pro  
peccatoribus dereliquenti-  
bus legem Tuam.

53. Compassionate zeal, proof  
of a sincere charity towards God  
and for souls. A fine model for  
a priest.

54. Cantabiles mihi erant  
justificationes Tuæ in loco

54. He who is a stranger on  
earth only desires the canticles

peregrinationis meæ.

55. Memor fui nocte nominis Tui, Domine, et custodivi legem Tuam.

56. Hæc facta est mihi quia justificationes Tuas exquisivi.

VIII. — 57. Portio mea, Domine, dixi custodire legem Tuam.

58. Deprecatus sum faciem Tuam in toto corde meo; miserere mei secundum eloquium Tuum.

59. Cogitavi vias meas et converti pedes meos in testimonia Tua.

60. Paratus sum et non sum turbatus ut custodiam mandata Tua.

61. Funes peccatorum circumplexi sunt me, et legem Tuam non sum oblitus.

of heaven : *Habentes solatio sanctos libros.*—I. Mach. xii.

55. The night of the soul is the time of trial, of affliction and darkness; it is also the time for merit.

56. Consolations are the just reward of fidelity. *Cum sancto sanctus eris.*—Ps. xvii.

57. There are but few who renounce all to serve God, fewer still who persevere in so doing.

58. To pray with all our heart it should suffice to thoroughly know our own misery.

59. Constant watchfulness over self, ever striving to reform self; such should be the Christian's life. Fine sermon of Bossuet upon this text, 11<sup>o</sup> for Quinquagesima.

60. The way not to fail in fidelity to God is to look out for trials and prepare our resolutions beforehand.

61. Our Saviour could literally apply to Himself these words : *Tribunus et ministri Judæorum ligaverunt Eum.*—Joan. xviii. *Benedictus Dominus ! Laqueus contritus est et nos liberati sumus.*—Ps. cxxiii.

62. Media nocte surgebam  
ad confitendum Tibi super  
judicia justificationis Tuæ.

63. Particeps ego sum  
omnium timentium Te et  
custodientium mandata Tua.

64. Misericordia Tua, Domine,  
plena est terra ; justificationes  
Tuas doce me.

62. Fine example of holy  
firmness. A reproach to the  
negligent cleric who would not  
pay his due to God till the last  
moment.

63. This is one of the characters  
of charity and of Christian wisdom.  
*Bonis consentiens.*  
—Jac. iii. *Unum corpus multi-  
sumus qui de uno pane participa-  
mus.*—I. Cor. x.

64. *Pater vester solem Suum  
oriri facit super bonos et malos.*  
—Matt. v. *Doce me.* Oh desirable  
science, the science of sanctity !  
What is all other science in comparison ?

### *Teth and Jod.*

IX.—65. Bonitatem fecisti  
cum servo Tuo, Domine,  
secundum verbum tuum.\*

66. Bonitatem et disciplinam  
et scientiam doce me  
quia mandatis Tuis credidi.

65. We should think of the  
benefits of God, especially of  
His particular ones ; they serve  
to excite gratitude.

66. God is the Author of all  
knowledge as of virtue ; but we  
must ask for virtue before all  
things : *Scientia sine timore Dei*

\* A novice of the order of Premontre who had spent many years in the world, having gone to a sick monk in order to assist him in his last moments ; the latter called him to him and said : " Brother, whenever you recite this verse *Bonitatem fecisti*, always say it with great affection ". " Yes, father," the novice replied, " like the rest of the Office." Seeing that his thought was not taken in the dying man added : " There is also another verse that should much interest you—*Quia misericordia Tua magna est super me et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori* " !—*Life of J. Hermann, 7 April, Act. Sanct.*



*quid importat?—Imit. i. Credidi: confisus sum, confido.*

67. Priusquam humiliarer ego deliqui; propterea eloquium Tuum custodivi.

68. Bonus es Tu et in bonitate Tua doce me justificationes Tuas.

69. Multiplicata est super me iniquitas superborum; ego autem in toto corde meo scrutabor mandata Tua.

70. Coagulatum est sicut lac cor eorum; ego vero legem Tuam meditatus sum.

71. Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me ut discam justificationes Tuas.

72. Bonum mihi lex oris Tui super millia auri et argenti.

X.—73. Manus Tuæ fecerunt me et plasmaverunt me;

67. Pride causes many falls; happy they who in their fall find a source of humility.

68. *Nemo bonus nisi solus Deus.*—Matt. xix. It is His goodness that alone interests itself in our sanctification.

69. We are in a manner forced to turn toward God when we see so many enemies turned against us. How many saints would have been lost if they had not been exposed to persecution!

70. Dissipation and infidelity harden the heart; meditation enlightens the intelligence and inflames the will.

71. To say this with all our heart in affliction is to derive profit from it, according to the designs of God.

72. *Lex oris Dei.* This is particularly the Gospel.—Hebr. i. We should hear Our Lord's words as though they came from His own mouth, and should esteem them as worth Eternal Life to those who observe them.

73. God having done for man more than for the rest of

da mihi intellectum et discam mandata Tua.

74. Qui timent Te videbunt me et lætabuntur, quia in verba Tua supersperavi.

75. Cognovi, Domine, quia æquitas judicia Tua et in veritate Tua humiliasti me.

76. Fiat misericordia Tua ut consolatur me secundum eloquium Tuum servo Tuo.

77. Veniant mihi miserationes Tuæ et vivam; quia lex Tua meditatio mea est.

78. Confundantur superbi quia injuste iniquitatem fecerunt in me: Ego autem exercebor in mandatis Tuis.

79. Convertantur mihi timentes Te et qui noverunt testimonia Tua.

80. Fiat cor meum immacu-

His creatures, how can He refuse him the light necessary to attain his end and fulfil his destiny?

74. *Caritas congaudet veritati* —I. Cor. xiii. He who loves God rejoices to see Him honoured. Our Saviour said to the Jews: *Abraham exsultavit ut videret diem Meum; vidit et gavisus est.*—Joan. viii.

75. *Cognovi*: I acknowledged. Nothing more just and nothing so rare as the sincere acknowledgment that we merit what we have to suffer.

76. We must pray to God, not for exemption from sufferings, but for those comforts and helps of which we feel the want.

77. *Et vivam*: What would life be without God's grace? and what grace can we obtain without meditation and prayer?

78. A desire of charity, not of vengeance.—Confusion is the remedy for pride. *Humiliatio est via ad humilitatem sicut lectio ad scientiam.*—S. Bern.

79. The society of fervent souls is the joy and security of the just.

80. May this be chief desire

latum in justificationibus Tuis  
ut non confundar !

of our heart. It was that of  
S. Cecilia : *Cantantibus organis  
Domino decantabat dicens ; Fiat  
cor meum immaculatum, etc.*—  
1st Anthem of Lauds.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE HOUR OF SEXTE.

#### § I.

PLACED between Tierce and None the Hour of Sexte has somewhat of the joy of the one and the sorrow of the other. The sun is at mid-day ; but already the day enters its second phase and begins to decrease.

It is the hour when fatigue and the custom of civil life suspend labour and draw together the members of the Christian family. It is right to beg of God union of hearts at the same time as we beg food for the body.—*Salutem corporum veramque pacem cordium.*

This too is the hour when the Son of God, forgetting the need He had of food and repose, was teaching the Samaritan woman the way of truth and of salvation near the well of Jacob—*Hora erat quasi sexta.\** It was at this hour that stretching Himself upon the bed of, the cross He offered His hands and feet to the executioners to be nailed by them to the cross, and it was at this time that the affrighted sun began to veil its light—*A sexta autem hora tenebræ factæ sunt.†*

\* *I. Joan. iv. 6.*

† *Matth. xxvii. 45 ; Luc. xxxiii. 44.* Thus, says S. Cyril of Jerusalem, our Saviour chose that the reparation should coincide with the fall, and that He should redeem man at the same hour that Adam fell : *Quo tempore fuit eversio, eodem rursus facta est reparatio.*—*Cathec. xiv.*

Lastly, it was at this hour that the Prince of the Apostles, offering to God his prayers in mortification and recollection, received from heaven the order to labour in the conversion of the world.\*

These thoughts are so many motives for praying with ardour in union with Jesus Christ for the sanctification of souls, the extension of the Church, and the accomplishment of the Will of God on earth.

The first verses of the Psalm, *Deficit in salutare Tuum . . . .* exhibit the sentiment of zeal with which Our Lord's heart was consumed during the whole of His life, and which made Him say on the Cross, *Sitio*; as at Jacob's well, *Da mihi bibere*. The remainder of the psalm corresponds likewise in a special manner to the state of trial and humiliation which is the natural condition of a Christian on earth.

## § II. AD SEXTAM.

*Hymn, S. Ambrosii.*

Rector potens, verax Deus,  
Qui temperas rerum vices  
Splendore mane illuminas  
Et ignibus meridiem.

It is not from their own strength that creatures derive their virtue and action. God sustains them and acts at every moment in and by them: *Sol in meridiano exurit terram; magnus Dominus Qui fecit illum.*  
—Eccli. xliii. *Illuminas mane,* taken substantively as in Genesis: *Vespere et mane dies unus.*

Extingue flammas litium,  
Aufer calorem noxium,

*Flammas litium: Linguae ignis est, universitas iniquitatis.*—Jac.

\* Act x. 10.

Confer salutem corporum  
Veramque pacem cordium.

iii. *Calorem noxium*: Concupiscence, covetousness, passions whose heat inflames the heart and senses. *Veram pacem*: *Non quomodo mundus dat.*—John xiv. *Pax multa diligentibus legem Tuam, Domine, ut infra.*

# CONTINUATION OF PSALM CXVIII.

## *Caph and Lamed.*

XI.—81. Defecit in salutare Tuum anima mea et in verbum Tuum supersperavi.\*

81. *Salutare Tuum.* The sanctification of the world, the salvation that comes from heaven, is the Incarnate Word, the Redeemer. *Defecit*: Transport of love. *Non languet amor sed languet amans.* Gilbert, abb. *In spem contra spem.*—Rom. iv.

82. Defecerunt oculi mei in eloquium Tuum dicentes: Quando consolaberis me?

82. *Bonus iste defectus*, says S. Augustine. *Sic teneræ uxor ætatis de specula littorali indefessa expectatione conjugis præstolatur adventum ut quamcumque navim viderit illic putet conjugem navigare, metuatque ne*

\* "I was one day in a state of profound dejection," writes F. Louis Dupont. "These words of David—*Supersperavi*—gave me great confidence. It seemed to me that, notwithstanding my misery, I might hope for union and familiarity with God and joy in suffering. This comparison rose in my mind: as an abyss between me and the sun does not prevent it from enlightening and warming me, so all my wretchedness, if I trust well in God and have a true grief for my sins, will not prevent the rays of Light and Love of the Sun of Justice from penetrating even to me."—*Life*, by P. Cachupin, xxiv.



*alius antevertat, nec ipsa possit  
prima dicere video te, marite !—*

S. Ambr.

83. Quia factus sum sicut  
uter in pruina, justificationes  
Tuas non sum oblitus.

83. Whatever our dryness  
and trials we must persevere  
in obedience and love : *Bene-  
dicite glacies et nives Domino.—*  
Dan. iii.

84. Quot sunt dies servi  
Tui quando facies de perse-  
quentibus me iudicium ?

84. These enemies, these  
persecutors, are the world, the  
flesh, the devil. God will soon  
deliver us from them : *Ecce  
mensurabiles posuisti dies meos.*  
—Ps. xxxviii.

85. Narraverunt mihi ini-  
qui fabulationes, sed non ut  
lex Tua.

85. *Tanquam si tu nosses  
solem, et alicui laudanti lucer-  
nam dicere ; Non es ista lux !—*  
S. Aug. Those who begin to  
taste God feel a disgust for  
the things of the world—a dis-  
gust that increases with age.

86. Omnia mandata Tua  
veritas ; iniqui persecuti sunt  
me, adjuva me.

86. The great point is not to  
shun the Cross, but to bear it  
as becomes a Christian.

87. Paulo minus consum-  
averunt me in terra ; ego  
autem non dereliqui mandata  
Tua.

87. We must remain faithful  
and keep ourselves in peace :  
*Conjungere Deo et sustine, ut  
crescat in novissimo vita tua.—*  
Eccli. ii.

88. Secundum misericor-  
diam Tuam vivifica me, et  
custodiam testimonia oris Tui.

88. *Vivifica me : Be Thou  
my life. Cognovi verum esse  
quod legimus, quoniam in Ipso  
vivimus movemur et sumus : sed  
ille beatus est in quo est Ipse, Qui*

*illi vivit, Qui eo movetur!*—S. Bern.

XII. — 89. In æternum, Domine, verbum Tuum permanet in cœlo.

90. In generationem et generationem veritas Tua ; fundasti terram et permanet.

91. Ordinatione Tua perseverat dies quoniam omnia serviunt Tibi.

92. Nisi quod lex Tua meditatio mea est, tunc forte periissem in humilitate mea.

93. In æternum non obliviscar justificationes Tuas quia in ipsis vivificasti me.

94. Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac ; quoniam justificationes Tuas exquisivi.

95. Me expectaverunt peccatores ut perderent me ; testimonia Tua intellexi.

89. *In cœlo.* In the heaven of the stars and in the heaven of the elect. Why is not the Will of God accomplished on earth as it is in heaven ?

90. The Word of God is the principle and the support of all existence. *Portans omnia.*—Hebr. i. How can we infringe it without trembling ?

91. Order reigns everywhere except where sin has sway.

92. The Word of God is the food and strength of the soul ; to abandon it is to expose oneself to the greatest perils.

93. Who can forget after his conversion the mercy of which he has been the object ? S. Theodore Studites gave up his soul to God whilst reciting this verse.—11 Nov.

94. *Salvum me fac.* The cry of S. Peter sinking in the sea.—Matt. xiv. *Tuus :* By right we all belong to God ; but in reality He will only count those His who keep His law.

95. The Introit of virgins-martyrs. A truth of faith well understood suffices for a triumph

over every trial: *Confitebor Tibi, Pater!*—Matt. xi.

96. Omnis consummationis vidi finem; latum mandatum Tuum nimis.

96. *Finis præcepti est caritas de corde puro: Iste finis latus est.*—S. Aug. Charity elevates and enlarges the soul. Everything here passes away, oh my God! everything comes to an end! Thy will alone ends not. If we obey it on earth we shall accomplish it eternally and gloriously in heaven.

### *Mem and Nun.*

XIII.—97. Quomodo dilexi legem Tuam, Domine! tota die meditatio mea est.

97. The more we consider the law of God the more we love it; the more we love it the more we desire to make it the object of our thoughts.

98. Super inimicos meos prudentem me fecisti mandato Tuo, quia in æternum mihi est.

98. True prudence consists in preferring eternity to time; this is what the law of God teaches us to do. *Mihi est lex meditatio.*

99. Super omnes docentes me intellexi quia testimonia Tua meditatio mea est.

99. Nothing so much enlightens the mind as meditation of the Divine truths: *Intellectum dat parvulis.*—Ps. cxxx. Intelligence is much above science. Many are there who understand less what they teach than those who listen to them.

100. Super senes intellexi,  
quia mandata Tua quæsi.

100. *In persona Christi loquitur*, says S. Aug., recalling Our Lord teaching in the Temple.—Luc. ii. Every true Christian partaking of the lights of Christ has a right to use the same language.—*Senes, Presbyter est senior.*

101. Ab omni via mala  
prohibui pedes meos, ut cus-  
todiam verba Tua.

101. The affections are the soul's feet, the principle of its movements; we cannot watch too much over their purity.

102. A Judiciis Tuis non  
declinavi quia Tu legem po-  
suisti mihi.

102. *Tu mihi!* If we reflect that it is God Who commands we shall not be tempted to disobey.

103. Quam dulcia faucibus  
meis eloquia Tua! super mel  
ori meo.

103. If it had less attraction could it induce us to embrace so many sacrifices and practise so many virtues? But what an abuse to pronounce these words with indifference and lukewarmness!

104. A mandatis Tuis  
intellexi; propterea odivi  
omnem viam iniquitatis.

104. *A mandatis intellexi:* We do not understand the Law of God if we do not practise it, says S. Jerome. *Propterea odivi . . .* Attachment to sin and taste for the Holy Scriptures are incompatible.

XIV.—105. Lucerna pe-  
dibus meis verbum Tuum

105. The sun of souls is the Word of God; His written

et lumen semitis meis.\*

106. Juravi et statui custodire judicia justitiæ Tuæ.

107. Humiliatus sum usquequoque, Domine; vivifica me secundum verbum Tuum.

108. Voluntaria oris mei beneplacita fac, Domine, et judicia Tua doce me.

109. Anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem Tuam non sum oblitus.

Word is one of its rays. *Pedibus*: We need not penetrate the abyss; we are too happy to see or place our foot to walk surely.

106. No more salutary reflection than that our engagements bind us to God. *Multo melius est non vovere quam post votum promissa non reddere.*—Eccles. v.

107. Great humiliations announce and prepare for faithful souls great favours: *Ante passiones et contumelias affecti, fiduciam habuimus in Deo nostro.*—I. Thess. ii.

108. *Voluntaria: vota: promissa.*—May the homage of our lips be always inspired by our heart! then it will infallibly please God.

109. We must always keep ourselves in this state, always recollected, always self-possessed, always ready to do the Law of God by sacrificing our life for it if needed.

\* "On the 3rd July, 1645, having awoke between three and four o'clock with much mental pain and darkness, a light pierced through this obscurity, and from the height of heaven darted this truth into my soul—*Lucerna pedibus meis verbum Tuum.* Ah, Lord, how few are there who desire to walk in the way of the Gospel, and according to the purity of Thy word; yet how peacefully should we live if we but walked in simplicity."—Olier, *Memoires*, t. v. p. 139.

110. Posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi, et de mandatis Tuis non erravi.

111. Hæreditate acquisivi testimonia Tua in æternum, quia exultatio cordis mei sunt.

112. Inclinavi cor meum ad faciendas justificationes Tuas in æternum propter retributionem.

110. *Frustra jacitur rete ante oculos pennatorum.*—Prov. xvii. The love of God gives wings to the soul, and its detachment saves her from many snares.

111. Such is our portion—such should be our delight: *Sint castæ deliciæ meæ Scripturæ Tuæ, Domine.*—S. Aug.

112. *Inclinavi*: Inclination of a perfect soul. Perfection consists less in the works we perform than in the disposition to do all those which God may ask of us.

### *Samech and Ain.*

XV.—113. Iniquos odio habui et legem Tuam dilexi.

114. Adjutor et susceptor meus es Tu, et in verbum Tuum supersperavi.

115. Declinate a me maligni et scrutabor mandata Dei mei.

113. *Qui diligitis Dominum odite malum.*—Ps. xcvi. *Parum est malorum facta non facere, nisi displiceant; parum est ut displiceant nisi redarguantur.*—S. Aug.

114. Nothing increases so much our trust in God as the experience we come to feel regarding His will.

115. This verse was familiar to S. Gregory the Great, says S. Bonaventure. *Scrutabor*: Seek the thoughts of God in the Scripture as you would seek for gold in the earth.



116. Suscipe me secundum eloquium Tuum et vivam, et non confundas me ab expectatione mea.

117. Adjuva me et salvus ero et meditabor in justificationibus Tuis semper.

118. Sprevesti omnes discedentes a judiciis Tuis, quia injusta cogitatio eorum.

119. Prævaricantes reputavi omnes peccatores terræ; ideo dilexi testimonia Tua.

120. Confige timore Tuo carnes meas : a judiciis enim Tuis timui.

XVI.—121. Feci iudicium et justitiam : non tradas me calumniantibus me.

122. Suscipe servum Tuum in bonum : non calumnientur me superbi.

123. Oculi mei defecerunt in salutare Tuum et in eloquium justitiæ Tuæ.

116. If we wish to avoid all deception, let us place our confidence in God and look for everything from Him.

117. No salvation but in Jesus Christ ; He alone can make us love His law.

118. The more the sinner exalts himself, the more God despises his pride. *Discedentes : Qui non est Mecum contra Me est.*—Matt. xii.

119. *Peccatum non accidit nisi ex prævaricatione legis :* Esteem only virtue and pity all sinners.

120. *Confige :* Fix to the cross. *Timui :* *Estote timidi ut sitis intrepidi.*—S. Cypr.

121. Try to fulfil all justice, but always beg for the mercy of God. *Calumniantes ; id est diabolus : Quia mendax est pater mendacii.*—Joan. viii.

122. The world's persecutions are a recommendation in the sight of God. *In bonum :* The Law of God is our treasure ; our fidelity depends upon its accomplishment.

123. The eyes of worldlings are fixed upon the earth : those of the just look towards heaven. *Sicut oculi servorum in manibus domini sui.*—Ps. cxxii. *Salutare*

*Tuum.*—S. Aug. Here always understand our Lord Himself—*Salvator Jesus.*

124. *Fac cum servo Tuo secundum misericordiam Tuam et justificationes Tuas doce me.*

125. *Servus Tuus sum ego ; da mihi intellectum ut sciam testimonia Tua.*

126. *Tempus faciendi, Domine : dissipaverunt legem Tuam.*

127. *Ideo dilexi mandata Tua super aurum et topazion.*

128. *Propterea ad omnia mandata Tua dirigebar : omnem viam iniquam odio habui.*

124. It is a great mercy of God to enlighten us upon our duties.

125. *Da mihi intellectum :* But few sincerely ask to know the will of God. *Noluit intelligere ut bene ageret.*—Ps. xxxv.

126. When God's authority is despised — when His laws are trampled under foot—then is the time to show what we are—to perform acts of justice for Him no less than for His servants.

127. *Quærite primum regnum Dei.*—Matt. vi. What are all the treasures of this world in comparison with the pearl for which we must sell everything?

128. We hate vice by the same feeling that makes us love virtue. *Scio quia non potes sustinere malos,* says Our Lord in His praise of the Bishop of Ephesus.—Apoc. ii.

## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE HOUR OF NONE.

#### § I.

AT None the sun declines visibly towards the horizon, and his downward course foretells the early close of day. The hymn invites us with renewed ardour to obtain from the Eternal and Unchangeable God grace to end happily our day and life.

At this hour Our Lord Jesus Christ returned His Soul by His Own Will into the hands of His Father. Having pardoned the repentant thief, and prayed for forgiveness for His executioners, He saw, says the Gospel, that all was accomplished; and crying out with a loud voice, as it were a last prayer to the Supreme Majesty, He died, and went to carry to the just of the Old Law the signal of their deliverance: *Circa horam nonam clamans voce magna expiravit.\** It is fitting therefore that we should honour in this part of the Office the last moments of Our Lord's life. On this view of it we might form some suitable intention; for example, to thank God for the benefit of Redemption; to ask in union with Jesus Christ for the conversion of sinners, specially for those who have persecuted Him in us or in His representa-

\* *Matth. xxvii. 46, 50.*

tives;\* to offer our life in sacrifice with His and to accept with Him everything in accordance with the Divine Will; lastly, to obtain through Him from heaven the relief of souls detained in Purgatory.

The verse "*Mirabilia*" with which the psalm is resumed may be regarded as the theme or complement of all those that follow. Not only does the Psalmist weary not in the praises of God, but his fervour and admiration seem to increase in proportion as he approaches the end. Happy the priest animated with the same spirit who, as the result of meditating on this psalm (*os justī meditabitur* †), has been able to appropriate its sentiments who wills only what God wills and who desires it more ardently day by day. Happy above all they whose conduct answers to these dispositions and whose every work is a homage to the Divine Will! It is to them Our Lord promises all His Love in this world and all His rewards in the next. ‡

## § II. AD NONAM.

### *Hymn, S. Ambrosii.*

Rerum Deus, tenax vigor	<i>Tenax vigor.</i>	God is the
Immotus in Te permanens	support and principle of all	
Lucis diurnæ tempora	creation :	<i>Quomodo posset</i>

\* "Passio enim Domini usque ad finem producit mundi. Et sicut in sanctis suis Ipse honoratur, Ipse diligitur, et in pauperibus Ipse pascitur; ita in omnibus qui pro justitia adversa tolerant, Ipse compatitur."—S. Leo, *Serm. xix. de Passione Domini*. "Unde illi persecutori sonuit de cœlo: *Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris?*"—S. Aug. *Ep. lv. ad Ian. No. 31*.

† *Ps. xxxv. 30*.

‡ "Non enim omnis qui dicit mihi: Domine, Domine, sed qui facit voluntatem Patris mei, intrabit in regnum cœlorum. Quicumque fecerit voluntatem Patris Mei, ipse Meus frater, et soror, et mater est."—*Matth. vii. 21, xii. 50*.

Successibus determinans.

Largiri lumen vespere  
Quo vita nusquam decadat,  
Sed præmium mortis sacræ  
Perennis instet gloria.

*aliquid permanere nisi Tu  
voluisses.*—Sap. xi. *Immotus*:  
What more striking than the  
immutability of God among so  
many changes, or than His in-  
finite Power amidst so much  
weakness? *Determinans tem-  
pora lucis diurnæ (seu horas diei),  
singulis suum ordinem assignans.*

The end of the day makes  
us think of the end of life.  
May then the day of our life  
not close in darkness as does  
to-day! May our last moments  
be illumined by the brightness  
of heaven and may they be like  
those of Simeon the dawn of a  
day that has no night! *Nus-  
quam: Nunquam, nullo modo.*

### *Phe and Tsade.*

XVII.—129. Mirabilia tes-  
timonia Tua: ideo scrutata est  
ea anima mea.

130. Declaratio sermonum  
Tuorum illuminat et intellec-  
tum dat parvulis.

129. Tierce opens with a  
testimony of obedience. *Legem  
pone*; Sexte with an ardent de-  
sire of sanctification: *Defecit*;  
None with a cry of admiration  
at the divine wisdom: *Mira-  
bilia—Testimonia tua*: what can  
be worthier of our study? *Disce  
cor Dei in verbis Dei.*—S. Greg.

130. Nothing so clear as  
the Word of God. *Perceptum  
Domini lucidum.*—Ps. xviii. But

131. Os meum aperui et  
attraxi Spiritum quia man-  
data Tua desiderabam.\*

132. Aspice in me et  
miserere mei secundum ju-  
dicium diligentium nomen  
Tuum.

133. Gressus meos dirige  
secundum eloquium Tuum ;  
et non dominetur mei omnis  
injustia.

134. Redime me a calum-  
niis hominum ut custodiam

it is for humble souls only : *Re-  
velasti ea parvulis.*—Matt. xi.

131. *Aperui : præ desiderio.*  
*Attraxi Spiritum, Spiritum sa-  
pientiæ et caritatis.* As the  
body draws in every moment  
the air that nourishes it, so the  
soul ought unceasingly to aspire  
after the grace of the Holy Ghost  
Who is the strength of its life.

132. *Secundum judicium,* with  
that bounty Thou deignest to  
show towards those who love  
Thee. *Ut soles, diligendo prior  
diligentes Te.*

133. *Et non dominetur ;*  
*Christus nos liberavit. . . .*  
*Non ergo regnet peccatum in*  
*vestro mortali corpore ut obedi-*  
*atis concupiscentiis ejus.*—Gal.  
iv., Rom. vi.

134. Escape from persecu-  
tion is desirable only so far

\* This verse recalls an admirable example of faith and love towards the B. Sacrament, related by Asbert, a canon-regular, in the notice he has left us of his master, Hugh de S. Victor, 1141. "The eve of his death, I came to see him early in the morning and asked him how he was? *Very well*, he replied, *both in soul and in body.* Then, being certain that we were alone, he continued : *Have you said Mass to-day ?* I replied, *Yes.* *Approach*, he said, *and breath over my face in the form of the Cross to communicate to me the Holy Ghost.* I did so, and he then gave out these words : *Os meum aperui*, etc. Thus remembering that the apostles had received the Holy Ghost by the breath of Our Lord, this holy dying man opened his mouth to receive it by the breath of a man as unworthy as me on account of the communion I had had the happiness of receiving."



mandata Tua.

135. Faciem Tuam illumina super servum Tuum et doce me justificationes Tuas.

136. Exitus aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei quia non custodierunt legem Tuam.

XVIII.—137. Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium Tuum.

138. Mandasti justitiam testimonia Tua et veritatem Tuam nimis.

139. Tabescere me fecit zelus meus quia obliti sunt verba Tua inimici mei.

140. Ignitum eloquium Tuum vehementer et servus Tuus dilexit illud.

141. Adolescentulus sum

as it assists our perfection : *Ut quietam et tranquillam vitam agamus in omni pietate et castitate.*—I. Tim. ii.

135. The Word of God is the Sun of Souls. When it reveals itself to them it reveals at the same time the truth of all its sayings.

136. *Exitus ; fluentia. Non custodierunt peccatores ;* or else *ipsimet oculi*, according to S. Augustine. *Fleverunt oculi David quia ipsimet oculi peccaverunt.*

137. Profound and salutary words which the Emperor Maurice repeated at the sight of his five sons slaughtered in 602, and which we may repeat in the trials of life.

138. We trample under foot justice and truth when we break the commandments of God.

139. Such should be the true minister of God. *Minus persequemini*, said S. Aug. to sinners, *cum in nos sævitis, quam cum vos peritis.*

140. *Legebam et sedebam*, said the same Saint.—Conf. IX. And elsewhere : *Audiendo Te felix sum !*

141. What matters it if loved

ego et contemptus ; justificationes Tuas non sum oblitus.

142. *Justitia Tua, justitia in æternum et lex Tua veritas.*

143. *Tribulatio et angustia invenerunt me ; mandata Tua meditatio mea est.*

144. *Æquitas testimonia Tua in æternum, intellectum da mihi et vivam.*

by God, we are condemned by the world. See this verse commented upon in the Office of S. Stans Kostka, 13 Nov., lesson 8.

142. The judgments of men are uncertain and variable, the judgment of God is infallible and irrevocable.

143. One of the advantages of adversity is to recall to us the law of God. *Invenerunt* : As messengers coming on the part of God.

144. Observe the law and you shall live.—Luc. x. O Divine Master, make me understand its advantages and I shall be faithful to it : *Domine ut videam*.—Luc. xviii.

### *Coph and Resh.*

XIX.—145. *Clamavi in toto corde meo ; exaudi me, Domine ; justificationes Tuas requiram.*

146. *Clamavi ad Te salvum me fac ut custodiam mandata Tua.*

147. *Præveni in maturitate et clamavi quia in verba Tua supersperavi.*

148. *Prævenirent oculi*

145. Model of a perfect prayer. It is rare to pray with such ardour and for such an end.

146. *Flagrantia caritatis clamor cordis est. Si semper fervet caritas semper clamas*.—S. Aug.

147. *Præveni : Iter præoccupavi. In maturitate : Maturi festinanter.* Happy he whose heart rises of itself to God.

148. *Accelera quantum vis,*

mei ad Te diluculo ut meditarer eloquia Tua.

149. Vocem meam audi secundum misericordiam Tuam, Domine, et secundum iudicium Tuum vivifica me.

150. Appropinquaverunt persequentes me iniquitati a lege autem Tua longe facti sunt.

151. Prope es Tu, Domine, et omnes viæ Tuæ veritas.

152. Initio cognovi de testimoniis Tuis quia in æternum fundasti ea.

XX.—153. Vide humilitatem meam et redime me : propter eloquium Tuum vivifica me.

154. Judica iudicium Tuum et redime me propter eloquium Tuum vivifica me.

says S. Bernard ; *etiam ipsas anticipare vigilias ; invenies Eum ; non prevenies.*

149. The goodness of God and His promises are all our hope. *Neque enim in justificationibus nostris prosternimus preces ante faciem Tuam sed in miserationibus Tuis multis.*—Dan. ix.

150. Let us pity those who persecute us, and let us pray for them with sincere charity. To abandon the law of God and yield ourself up to iniquity, is a double misfortune, a double subject for pity.

151. *Prope es.* In vain the sinner wanders away by his will and his desires, none can escape Thy sight or Thy judgments.

152. The law of God being unchangeable, our submission to it should be constant.

153. Humility attracts the notice of God : *Respexit humilitatem ancillæ Suæ.*—Luc. i. *Respexit in orationem humilium et non sprevit precem eorum.*—Ps. ci.

154. Our Lord has redeemed us from the slavery of the devil, but who will deliver us from our depraved desires and our vicious habits ?

155. Longe a peccatoribus salus quia justificationes Tuas non exquisierunt.

156. Misericordiæ Tuæ multæ, Domine, secundum iudicium Tuum vivifica me.

157. Multi qui persequuntur me et tribulant me : a testimoniis Tuis non declinavi.

158. Vidi prævaricantes et tabescebam quia eloquia Tua non custodierunt.

159. Vide quoniam mandata Tua dilexi, Domine ; in misericordia Tua vivifica me.

160. Principium verborum Tuorum veritas, in æternum omnia iudicia justitiæ Tuæ.

155. Why is salvation so far from sinners? Because it pleases them to wander from the path of justice.—*Prope es Tu, Domine*—Supra 151.

156. *Multæ* : The mercies of God surpass all our miseries. *Misericordiæ Ejus super omnia opera Ejus*.—Ps. cxliv.

157. *Factum est*, says S. Augustine, *novimus, agnoscimus, recolimus. Purpurata est terra sanguine Martyrum. Impletum est : Multi qui persequuntur me, etc.*

158. An apostolic sentiment : *Incitabatur Pauli Spiritus in ipso videns idolatriæ deditam civitatem*.—Act xviii.

159. We cannot deceive Almighty God. The love which He prizes most is that which has His law for its object. *Vivifica me* : This grace includes all other graces ; we should never be weary of praying for it.

160. The word of man is often deceitful, the word of God is Truth itself : *Cælum et terra transibunt verba autem Mea non præteribunt*.—Matt. xxiv.

*Schin and Thau.*

XXI.—161. Principes per-

161. *A verbis Tuis* : The

secuti sunt me gratis et a  
verbis Tuis formidavit cor  
meum.

162. Lætabor ego super  
eloquia Tua sicut qui invenit  
spolia multa.

163. Iniquitatem odio  
habui et abominatus sum;  
legem autem Tuam dilexi.

164. Septies in die laudem  
dixi Tibi; super judicia jus-  
titiae Tuæ.

165. Pax multa diligentibus  
legem Tuam et non est illis  
scandalum.

166. Expectabam salutare  
Tuum Domine et mandata  
Tua dilexi.

167. Custodivit anima  
mea testimonia Tua et dilexit

fear of God places us above  
all other fear. *Unum timet Chry-  
sostomus, peccatum.*—See Lesson  
IV. pro plur., Mart. 2<sup>o</sup> loc.

162. When we love God,  
must we not love His word?  
*Amicus sponsi gaudio gaudet  
propter vocem sponsi.*—Joan.  
iii.

163. It is not enough to  
hate iniquity, we must hold  
it in abomination.

164. *Septies*: Often. *Septena-  
rius enim plenitudinis numerus,  
universitatis indicium.*—S. Aug.  
*Si dicit Septies . . . qui regni  
erat necessitatibus occupatus quid  
nos facere oportet?*—S. Ambr.

165. When we love what  
God loves and will what He  
wills, what is there to trouble  
us or what loss have we to  
fear? *Diligentibus Deum omnia  
co-operantur in bonum.*—Rom.  
viii.

166. *Salutare*: *Salvatorem.*  
The people of Israel looked  
for the first coming of Jesus;  
we sigh after the second: *Nos-  
tra conversatio in cælis est unde  
etiam Salvatorem expectamus.*—  
Phil. iii.

167. *Custodivit et dilexit*:  
The more we practise the law

ea vehementer.

168. Servavi mandata Tua  
et testimonia Tua quia omnes  
viæ meæ in conspectu Tuo.

XXII. — 169. Appropin-  
quet deprecatio mea in con-  
spectu Tuo ; juxta eloquium  
Tuum da mihi intellectum.

170. Intret postulatio mea  
in conspectu Tui, secundum  
eloquium Tuum eripe me.

171. Eructabunt labia mea  
hymnum cum docueris me  
justificationes Tuas.

172. Pronuntiabit lingua  
mea eloquium Tuum quia  
omnia mandata Tua elegi.

173. Fiat manus Tua ut  
salvet me quoniam mandata  
Tua elegi.

174. Concupivi salutare  
Tuum, Domine, et lex Tua  
meditatio mea est.

of God, the more lovable do  
we find.

168. *In conspectu Tuo*: The  
presence of God. This is the  
great curb that keeps us in the  
way of the Law and the great  
impelling power to make us  
advance in it.

169. About to end his  
prayer, the psalmist redoubles  
his ardour and renews his  
petitions. *Sapientia et fortitudo  
Domini sunt.*—Dan. ii.

170. *Intret*: Many prayers  
rise not up to God because  
they fail in confidence in Our  
Lord's promises.

171. *Eructabunt*: Not every  
prayer which flows from the  
lips, but those only which come  
from the heart.

172. The disposition of a  
priestly soul is to love to speak  
of God and of every thing  
that concerns His law.

173. *Fiat*: *Utinam*. When  
we have taken God for our  
portion and His law for our  
sole rule, we have a right to  
expect the most precious  
graces.

174. If salvation be our only  
desire, of what can we think  
but of fulfilling God's law.



*Salutare Tuum*: Every thing that leads to salvation—our Saviour.

175. Vivet anima mea et laudabit Te, et judicia Tua adjuvabunt me.

175. *Vivet vita vera supernaturali, æterna*: A holy confidence that we shall find grace before God. *Adjuvabunt sic Deus me adjuvet et sancta Christi Evangelia.*

176. Erravi sicut ovis quæperiit; quære servum Tuum quia mandata Tua non sum oblitus.

176. *Quære*: Invocation to the Divine Pastor—*Pastorem magnum ovium*.—Hebr. xiii. Before the Incarnation the Holy Ghost required that we should ask for His coming; since the Ascension He causes us to desire His return. *Et Spiritus et sponsa dicunt: veni. Et qui audit dicat: veni. Veni Domine Jesu.*—Apoc. xxii.

### SECTION III.

#### *On the Evening Office.*

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### CHAPTER I.

#### VESPERS.

##### § I.

VESPERS and Compline which terminate the day's Office, are like the Evening Sacrifice of the New Law ; a spiritual sacrifice, having for its end thanksgiving to God for the graces received during the day, and their fruit should be a calm to the troubles of the soul and a desire for eternal repose.

But the views of the Church are always broad and salutary. In Her eyes the day is the image of our life and of the duration of the world. As She requires us to honour God every morning as the Principle of our existence, and obliges us to renew the offering of it to Him as though we had only just received it, so also every evening She shows us in Him the end of our career ; and exhorts us to consider in the decline of the day the close of our life, and in the approaching night a figure of that death towards which we are

hastening. She invites us to turn our eyes towards that more radiant and more lasting Day of which the days of this world are only a type and a faint reflection.

In the Hour of Vespers stands out particularly the idea of the Eternal Day which for the elect is to succeed to the darkness of this life. Such is the Church's thought in Her choice of the psalms which are then recited. She presents to us Jesus risen already rejoicing in heaven with His Elect, who are "the first fruits of them that sleep"; She lets us hear their joyful chants, full of admiration and thanksgiving; She invites us to unite with them by faith and desire till God should associate us with them in their glory and happiness, and grant us also that the passing and dim worship of time shall be succeeded by the luminous and unchangeable worship of eternity.\* The best practice to follow, according to our view, is to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ and to His saints reigning in heaven, and considering the psalms as the expression of their thoughts and sentiments, to associate ourselves with their dispositions with the utmost fervour.

Yet, if anyone prefer to consider Our Lord in His earthly life, and should ask in what particular circumstance the Hour of Vespers can represent it to us, we would, after the Gospel, point out the mystery of the Last Supper, that solemn moment when anticipating His bloody immolation, and celebrating for the first time the adorable Sacrifice of the Altar this Divine Master conferred upon His apostles, with the sacerdotal charac-

\* "Oratio non est nisi indigentium; transibit oratio; succedet in cœlis laudatio."—S. Aug., in *Psalm xxvi.*, *Enar. ii. 14.* "Vacabimus et videbimus; videbimus et amabimus; amabimus et laudabimus. Hoc erit in fine sine fine."—Id., *De liv. Dei, xxii.*, xxx. 5.

ter, the power to perpetuate here below these wonders. "It was the hour of Vespers," says the evangelist: *Vespere facto discumbebat cum discipulis Suis*.<sup>\*</sup> First, they consume the figurative Lamb, then the Sacred Host of which it was the figure; but they do not leave the table until they had sung a hymn: *Hymno dicto*,<sup>†</sup> which was, according to many doctors, the Psalm cxiii. commemorating the return from Egypt: *In exitu Israel*.

We may also think of the apparition at Emmaus, when Our Lord joined Himself a little before nightfall to two of His disciples who were on a journey, and renewing before them the mystery of the Breaking of Bread, obliged them to confess His Resurrection, and pay homage to His Love. *Et cognoverunt Eum in fractione panis*.<sup>‡</sup>

### *The Psalms of Vespers.*

Though not always the same, like those of the Little Hours, yet the Psalms of Vespers admit but few changes. § In the first place their number is always the same; and that being five, as at Lauds, it ought to recall the same objects—the five wounds of our Saviour, the fountains of every grace—the five senses by which we

<sup>\*</sup> *Matt. xvi. 20.*

<sup>†</sup> *Matt. xvi. 30.*

<sup>‡</sup> *Coegerunt Illum dicentes; Mane nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit et inclinata est jam dies. Et factum est dum recumberet cum eis accepit panem et benedixit. . . . Et aperti sunt oculi eorum et cognoverunt Eum. . . . Et dixerunt ad invicem: Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis dum aperiret nobis Scripturas?—Luc. xxiv. 29.*

§ At Vespers as at Matins the psalms succeed each other without ever inverting the order of the psalter. For the seven days of the week, they run without interruption from the 109th to the 147th. On feast days they are freely chosen within these limits but never exceeding them.

have sinned—the lamps of the five wise virgins which must be kept ready against the coming of the Bridegroom. Then, as the ferial Office is said early, and as at this Hour the festivals borrow almost all their psalms from the Sunday, it happens that, with the exception of a small number of days (and of the last psalm), the psalmody does not vary. It is important then to study it both in the letter and in the spirit. We must again place ourselves at the Church's point of view to be able to enter into Her thoughts and intentions in this respect.

As we have observed, the leading idea of this Hour is not that of the Creation, as at Lauds; it is that of the Redemption of man and of his Glorification in the society of his Saviour and Divine Head.

I. From the very first psalm, heaven seems to open and show us its glories. It would be difficult to find elsewhere so many wonders traced in so few words and in such sublime language. Here are all the grandeurs of the Redeemer proclaimed by God Himself—His eternal generation, His priesthood, His sacrifice, His labours, His triumph, the glory and strength of His empire. What more fit to raise the soul above this world and to cause her to despise its vanities? With what delight should the priest daily proclaim the titles with which the Eternal Father has honoured His Son and which this Divine Son communicates to His ministers and to His elect? With what gratitude, with what a sentiment of his vocation, with what respect for the holy altar, should he not repeat and apply to himself these grand words: *Tu es sacerdos in æternum. . . . Dominus a dextris Tuis. . . . Iudicabit in nationibus. . . .*

II. After having sung the praises of the Son of God triumphant in heaven, the Church celebrates with Him the goodness of His Father towards the elect and His living members. For we must not restrict to the people of Israel the words of the cx<sup>th</sup> psalm, *Confitebor Tibi*; they clearly apply to the entire Church, that is to say to that people of predilection which cover the whole earth and with whom He has concluded an eternal covenant. We should especially remark in it the wondrous food with which He nourishes them—*Escam dedit timentibus Se*—and the empire which He has promised them over all the nations—*Ut det illis hæreditatem gentium*—the favour He has shown in delivering them from the yoke of hell of which the Egyptian bondage was but a figure—*Redemptionem misit, etc.* There is nothing more touching than this psalm recited in union with Jesus Christ and His saints by a minister of the altar, who is at once the depository and dispenser of the Divine food which was prefigured by the manna.

III. The subject of the *Beatus Vir* naturally connects it with the preceding psalm. After having considered the chosen people, the Holy Ghost regards them in their Head and in each of their members. To the simple and affecting picture of the happiness of the just, of Him especially Who is the model and source of all justice, He opposes the misery of the impenitent sinner who, without atoning for his faults, suffers remorse, hatred and despair. There can be no exhortation more suitable to deter us from vice and recommend virtue.

IV. Just as this cxi<sup>th</sup> psalm is simple and calm in its character, so is the following one, *Laudate, pueri, ani-*



mated and sublime. The greatness of God and His condescension for our weakness delights the heart of the psalmist. There was a pious ecclesiastic who could not, he said, pronounce this grand passage, without a transport of joy: *Suscitans a terra inopem . . . ut collocet eum cum principibus . . .* because it reminded him of the favour which God had shown him in placing him among the Princes of His Church, and the still more precious grace which He destined for him—to place him in heaven among the princes of His everlasting kingdom. The last two verses make us think of the Church which has received the promise of inexhaustible fruitfulness, but which can only see Her children multiplied in proportion to the zeal and labours of Her ministers.

V. The last psalm has more variety. Most frequently, however, it is the cxvi<sup>th</sup> that is repeated: *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes. . . .* A simple cry of gratitude and of zeal and thanksgiving to the Lord for having given to every people the pledge of their redemption — an earnest prayer to obtain from the Divine Goodness the full realisation of His merciful designs. S. Francis Xavier was never tired of repeating it; he made it his ordinary invocation, because he found in it the expression of the most ardent desire of his soul, the propagation of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

We shall make no remark upon the other psalms that may have to be recited in this part of the Office. In thinking of the object of the festival we shall not fail to observe the reason which determined their choice and the applications which may be made of them. For

example, on the feasts of the B. Virgin, when the psalms, *Lætatus sum . . . Nisi Dominus . . . Lauda Jerusalem* are said, can we forget that Mary is pre-eminently *the house of the Lord, the tower of David, the holy city* celebrated by the Spirit of God? In the Office of Apostles are we not struck by the meaning of these verses: *In convertendo Dominus captivitatem Sion. . . . Euntes ibant et flebant.\* . . . Si habitavero in extremis maris illuc manus Tua deducet me. . . . Mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt amici Tui Deus.†* So again we do not fail to notice on the feasts of Martyrs this verse of the *Credidi*: *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum Ejus; Dirupisti vincula mea*; and on those of Pontiffs, these words so full of the sacerdotal spirit: *Si introiero tabernaculum domus meæ, si dederò somnum oculis meis, donec inveniam locum Domino. . . . Sacerdotes Tui induantur justitiam;‡* lastly, on the feasts of Virgins we observe in the expression of the purest and most elevated sentiments, the privilege of these innocent souls who pass through the world without any desire only that of heaven, and who render so much the more glory to God because of their humility and natural weakness.

### *The Cantic—Magnificat.*

But what most demands our study and our reflection in the Office of Vespers is the *Magnificat*—an incomparable cantic, whether we consider the object it celebrates, or the person of Her who pronounces it, or the sentiments it expresses.

\* *Ps. cxxv.* † *Ps. cxxxviii., Domine probasti me.* ‡ *Ps. cxxxi., Memento.*

The Church never sings it in the assembly of the faithful without accompanying this song with solemn ceremonies, and without asking of those present the same mark of attention and respect as are shown to the Holy Gospel. By these exterior signs She tries to make it be understood that it is the most sublime of canticles with the greatest and holiest of hearts for its composer. We should also remember this in our private recital. We should place ourselves in thought in the circumstances where it was first sung and in presence of the great wonders it celebrates. We should reflect that Mary has just been saluted for the first time as Mother of God, that She bears in Her womb the Treasure of Heaven and Earth, the Price of the World's Redemption, in short, the greatest gift that the Almighty and Divine Power could bestow in all eternity. We should consider that whilst the Incarnate Word reposes in Her the Spirit of God enlightens and inflames Her supernaturally; that knowing and possessing within Her Him who should be forever the object of the worship of all creatures, She feels Herself called upon to adore and bless Him for them all; lastly, by reason of the intimate union which Her Divine Maternity gives Her with Jesus Christ, and with His members, She partakes of their sentiments; and that consequently it is in the name of the Universal Church and of its Head, as also of its members, that She expresses Her admiration and gratitude for the great work which God has just accomplished.\* It is well also to recall to mind the circumstances of time and place. The Liturgists re-

\* "Beata Maria typus est Ecclesiæ."—S. Isid., in *Alleg. nov. Test.*

mark, that it was on the completion of Her journey to Hebron, probably in the evening, that Mary must have uttered this canticle; and besides, the Incarnation, which is its object, was accomplished—according to the ordinary manner of speaking of sacred writers, at the latter times, and, as it were, towards the sunset of ages: *Vergente mundi vespere*.\* By transporting ourselves thus in thought amid the same circumstances, and to the same place as the Blessed Virgin, we can easily enter into Her dispositions. We fancy we hear this Mother of the Living saying to our inmost soul, as the God-Man Who lives in Her: *Magnificate Dominum Mecum et exaltemus nomen Ejus in idipsum*.†

We feel urged to second Her in the expression of Her gratitude, or we are seized with the same spirit; and, dwelling upon the part we have in the mysteries She celebrates, we thank, from the bottom of our heart, this most sacred Virgin for having made Herself our helper, and for having paid beforehand a portion of our debt by expressing for us, in language so sublime, sentiments which our soul can hardly even conceive.

We may also consider the *Magnificat* as the expression of the actual sentiments of the Blessed Virgin in heaven. Certainly, there cannot be anything unreasonable in representing to ourselves this August Queen, surrounded by the angelic court, repeating unceasingly before God, in His name and in the name of all His children, the same acts of admiration and thanksgiving for graces the greatness of which She, more than anyone here

\* *Hym. Eccl.* "Quia ipsa virgo in vespere mundi suo singulari assensa mundo succurrit perditto."—V. Bed., *l. v. 9.*

† *Ps. xxxiii. 4.*

below, can best feel and proclaim.\* But however this may be, an ecclesiastic can scarcely meditate too much upon this divine canticle.† If he study it well, not only will he find in it admirable sentiments of religion and charity, but will discover there the entire heart of Mary with that elevation, purity, fervour, and every perfection which becomes the Mother of God. Therein he will learn to esteem in a supreme manner this great prodigy of Divine charity in the redemption of the world.‡ Above all he will find in it the model of those dispositions which befit the priesthood and its august functions and with which he ought to be filled. For can the priest ignore that God has done in him also *great things*, wonders of grace *in drawing him out of wretchedness to place him in the ranks of the princes of his people*? Can he forget that at the altar whence he descends, and up to which he will soon re-ascend, the Son of Mary wishes also to place Himself in his hands and descend into his heart? Has he not under his own eyes a world, as it were, of mysteries worked by his ministry: proud hearts humbled and converted, feeble souls strengthened in good, hungry ones filled and enriched, all the truly faithful, all the

\* Cf. Office of Saint Felix of Valois, 20 Nov., lect. vi., and S. Fr. de Sales, *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, l. v. c. xi.

† See on this canticle, Bossuet, *Elévations*; L. Dupont, *Méditations de la foi*; Berthier, *Reflexions Spirituelles*; P. Eudes, *Le Cœur admirable de Marie*. If a more extended commentary be desired the following may be consulted: P. A. Phanelius, *Exercitationes dormitantis animæ*, p. 11; Rut. Bensonius, *Dissertationes et commentaria in canticam Magnificat*, folio; and also many others mentioned by Hipp. Maraccius, *Bibliotheca Mariana*, Romæ, 1648.

‡ "Manifeste magnum est pietatis sacramentum, quod manifestatum est in carne, justificatum est in spiritu, apparuit angelis, prædicatum est gentibus, creditum est in mundo, assumptum est in gloria."—*I. Tim. iii. 16*.

worthy children of Abraham blessed, freed, and sanctified by the Divine mercy? Witness and co-operator in so many wonders which the Blessed Virgin perceived to be in the future, does he not desire to enter into the spirit of this Divine Mother, and realise in his own person that pious and just wish of the great doctor of Milan: *Sit in singulis Mariæ anima ut magnificet Dominum; sit in singulis spiritus Mariæ ut exsultet in Deo salutari Suo?*\* In conclusion, we remark the striking likeness between this Hour and that of Lauds. In both, five psalms and five antiphons; one little chapter, one hymn, varying according to the seasons and solemnities; a canticle, taken from the Gospel, upon the excellence and the effects of the Incarnation; the invocation of saints by special suffrages on ferias and feasts of inferior rank. Not only is there a perfect correspondence in every part of these Hours, *in psalmis, hymnis et canticis*,† but each finds itself placed at the two extremities of the Office, in the last rank but one. They are like those two holocausts of the old law, or like those

\* S. Ambr. *in Luc. i. ii.*, No. 26. "Since I became a religious," writes F. de Geramb, "I have never attended the Offices of the Church, particularly on the days consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, without having my soul raised up by the *Magnificat*, or without the sweetest thoughts and most tender affections being awakened in me. How often have I not asked myself, how could the lips of a humble maiden, born of poor parents, and without learning or art, put forth such grand, sublime and divine words? How could this virgin—obscure and unknown, who never knew the world and whom the world never knew—know and predict that the whole world, that all generations should not only know Her, but should call Her Blessed thenceforth and in all ages? And in the ecstasy that such a prodigy had thrown me I could not sufficiently thank God for having permitted that men of goodwill should find in the *Magnificat* one of the finest prophetic proofs of that religion which Jesus Christ came to bring down to earth."—*Pelerinage a Jerusalem, Lett. xxxiv.*

† *Coloss. iii. 16.*



sacred morning and evening songs with which God chose we should consecrate to Him the beginning and end of every day. *Offeretur holocaustium mane semper et vespere.\* Levitæ stent mane ad confitendum, similiter et ad vesperam.†*

## § II.

## AD VESPERAS.

*Psalm CIX.‡*

Our Lord proclaims with gratitude the glory with which His Father has crowned Him; His reign in heaven, His power on earth, His eternal Priesthood and His Kingship.

1. Dixit Dominus Domino  
Meo; sede a dexteris Meis.

1. *Dominus Domino*: The Son of God is God like His Father: *Hic est omnium Dominus.*—Act x. Nevertheless inasmuch as He is Man also, He has received everything like us, *grace and glory.*—*Sede*: After toil, repose and bliss—*A dextris*: first place next to the Divinity.

2. Donec ponam inimicos

2. Still, it will not be until

\* II. Paral. xxxi. 3.

† Paral. xxiii. 30.

‡ According to S. John Chrysostome this psalm comprises in a few words the greatest things: *Brevis numero verborum, magnus pondere sententiarum.* Cassiodorus sees in it the abridgment of the two Testaments. "Armarius sanctarum scripturarum ubi totum summatim dicitur quod utriusque Testamenti prædicatione narratur."—*In hunc. psalm.* Maldonatus has made a lengthened commentary upon it.

Tuos scabellum pedum Tuorum.

3. Virgam virtutis Tuæ emittet Dominus ex Sion: dominare in medio inimicorum Tuorum.

4. Tecum principium in die virtutis Tuæ, in splendoribus sanctorum; ex utero ante luciferum genui Te.

5. Juravit Dominus et non poenitebit Eum: Tu es Sacerdos in æternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech.

6. Dominus a dextris Tuis; confregit in die iræ Suæ reges.

7. Judicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas: conquassabit

the Last Day that His triumph will be completed, either in Himself, or in His members.—*Scabellum*: See Josue x. 24.

3. *Virgam*: Sceptre. The Church has come out of Sion; through Her the Lord rules in the midst of His enemies—ever being renewed but always vanquished.

4. *Principium*: *principatus*. That which is the strength of the Lord, which assures His triumph in the day of His power is His consubstantiality with His Father and that this Divine Principle has begotten Him in eternity before begetting Him in time, in His suffering life and glorious existence.

5. Jesus is the sole High Priest and only Victim capable of glorifying God and of sanctifying men. We here below are only His instruments and representatives.

6. The kings of the earth are but as reeds before God. When they behold their nothingness in the next life they shall not understand their pride here below.

7. He is the Judge of the world though He has been

capita in terra multorum.

8. De torrente in via bibet;  
propterea exaltabit caput.

judged by it ; woe to those who now have dared His Justice or despised His Greatness. *Non erubescamus de filio David ne iratum inveniamus Dominum David.*—S. Aug.

8. He has tasted here humiliations and sufferings, but afflictions pass away like a wave. In heaven alone glory and bliss are found—*Eum videmus, propter passionem mortis, gloria et honore coronatum.*—Hebr. ii.

### *Psalm CX.*

Our Lord, the Eternal Priest, praises and glorifies the Father for the graces bestowed upon His people.

1. Confitebor Tibi, Domine,  
in toto corde Meo: in consilio  
justorum et congregatione.

2. Magna opera Domini  
exquisita in omnes voluntates  
Ejus.

3. Confessio et magnificen-  
tia opus Ejus et justitia Ejus

1. *In toto corde: Habeat cor quod dicunt labia.*—S. Aug. *In consilio justorum:* in the Church we find this consolation; we are united to all the saints of heaven and earth; we have the same spirit, we offer the same homage, we pronounce the same words.

2. Everything that God does He does as God and impresses on it the seal of His Perfection! *Nec major in illis, nec minor in istis.*—S. Aug.

3. *Opus Ejus:* The great work of God in the midst of ages is

manet in sæculum sæculi.

4. Memoriam fecit mirabilium Suorum misericors et miserator Dominus : escam dedit timentibus Se.

5. Memor erit in sæculum testamenti Sui ; virtutem operum Suorum annuntiabit populo Suo.

6. Ut det illis hæreditatem gentium, opera manuum Ejus veritas et judicium.

7. Fidelia omnia mandata Ejus : confirmata in sæculum sæculi ; facta in veritate et æquitate.

8. Redemptionem misit populo Suo : \* mandavit in æternum testamentum Suum.

9. Sanctum et terribile

the Incarnation.—Hab. iii. Accordingly nothing so much sets forth His Greatness and Infinite Holiness.

4. Think of the Eucharist figured by the manna and instituted at the Last Supper ! Could God show more power, and at the same time more tenderness ?

5. It was in the Incarnation that the alliance between God and man was made : it will infallibly bear all its fruits.

6. The Church is to replace paganism as the people of old replaced the Chananians in the promised land.

7. The Word of the Lord is sure and invariable like truth and justice.

8. *In æternum.* Not content with saving us from the thralldom of the Devil, He has made with us an eternal covenant. We alone can break it.

9. *Sanctum sanctis :* says S.

\* We read in the 6th lesson of S. Peter Nolasco, founder of the Order of Mercy for the redemption of captives, 31st January, “*Sacris reffectus sacramentis fratres suos ad caritatem erga captivos cohortatus, et psalmum : Confitebor Tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo, devotissime recitans, ad illa verba : Redemptionem misit populo Suo, spiritum Deo reddidit, media nocte Nativitatis Domini anno 1256*”.

nomen Ejus : initium sapientiæ timor Domini.

10. Intellectus bonus omnibus facientibus Eum : laudatio Ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

Jerome, *et terribile peccatoribus*—Madmen alone fear not Him Who is to be alone feared !—Luc. xii.

10. *Eum : id est timorem Domini, seu quod timor Dei suadet.* All learning that has not the service of God for its end is vain. *Altiora ne quæsieris et fortiora tu ne scrutatus fueris, sed quæ præcepit tibi Deus illa cogita semper.*—Eccl. iii.

### *Psalm CXI.*

Our Lord promises happiness in this life to those who imitate His devotion and love for His Father.

1. Beatus vir qui timet Dominum in mandatis Ejus volet nimis.

2. Potens in terra erit semen ejus ; generatio rectorum benedicetur.

3. Gloria et divitiæ in domo ejus, et justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi.

4. Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis ; misericors et miserator et justus.

1. To fear the Lord is the first means of being happy ; to love His law is the second and chief means. *Et* or *qui* understood.

2. The just man always leaves behind him imitators who perpetuate his merits and his virtues: *Semen longævum* as Our Lord.—Is. liii.

3. The true abode of the just is that of eternity. *Thesaurizate vobis thesauros in Cælo.*—Matt. vi.

4. There is a special light for upright souls, they have likewise unspeakable comforts. *Signatum est super nos lumen*

*vultus Tui, Domine.* — Ps. iv.  
*Misericors . . . Dominus*  
 understood.

5. Jucundus homo qui miseretur et commodat ; disponet sermones suos in judicio, quia in æternum non commovebitur.

5. True wisdom inspires charity, and charity makes us beloved by God and man. *Quia* for *idcirco*.

6. In memoria æterna erit justus ; ab auditione mala non timebit.

6. The just man is above the power of detraction. The only word he dreads is the sentence of the Sovereign Judge : *Ite, maledicti.*—Matt. xxv.

7. Paratum cor ejus sperare in Domino ; confirmatum est cor ejus, non commovebitur donec despiciat inimicos suos.

7. Hope in God is a great grace ; it is always accompanied by peace, evenness of temper and sweetness.

8. Dispersit, dedit pauperibus, justitia ejus manet in sæculum sæculi ; cornu ejus exaltabitur in gloria.

8. *Dispersit.* Almsgiving is a seed that fructifies a hundred-fold : *Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem !*—Ps. xl. *Qui seminat in benedictionibus, de benedictionibus et metet.*—II. Cor. ix.

9. Peccator videbit et irascetur ; dentibus suis fremet et tabescet ; desiderium peccatorum peribit.

9. Jealousy of the just is a mark of the wicked, it is entirely opposed to charity ; fury and despair are the chastisement of the reprobate.

### *Psalm CXII.*

Our Lord, glorified in His own Person and in that of His saints, exhorts all His members to offer to the Divine Majesty a homage worthy of it.



1. Laudate, pueri, Dominum, laudate nomen Domini.

2. Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.

3. A solis ortu usque ad occasum laudabile nomen Domini.

4. Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus et super cœlos gloria Ejus.

5. Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster Qui in altis habitat, et humilia respicit in cœlo et in terra ?

6. Suscitans a terra inopem et de stercore erigens pauperem.

1. *Laudate.* God merits infinite praises for His goodness as well as for His greatness. *Pueri:* We must praise Him in His children, in His saints, in the humble of heart.

2. *Sit nomen.* The essential prayer of charity—first petition of the *Pater*—*Ex hoc* . . . it is repeated at each psalm in the *sicut erat.* . . . An eternity is too short to praise Him worthily.

3. God being everywhere, merits everywhere infinite praise.—S. F. Xavier.

4. *Omnes gentes quasi non sint, sic sunt coram Eo.*—Ps. xi. The only true greatness is that of the Lord ; but it requires the eye of faith to perceive it.—Heb. xi.

5. *Quis sicut Deus ?* Words of deep meaning ; terrible for the proud who revolt ; consoling for loving hearts who know how to imitate this model of humility and mercy.

6. This poor one, this indigent one is Man, whom Our Lord delivers from his misery to enrich him with His gifts and make him partake of His bliss.

7 Ut collocet eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi Sui.

7. This recalls the elevation of the Christian in grace, of priests in the Church, of saints in glory. In whatever rank we may be let us remember our original lowliness.

8. Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo matrem filiorum lætantem.

8. Everything is barren without the grace of God. Jesus Christ alone gives fertility to the Church ; He alone can give it to our souls.

*Psalm CXVI.\**

The same subject. Our Lord, glorified with His saints, invites all men to acknowledge the goodness of God and to bless Him for the fulfilment of His promises.

1. Laudate Dominum omnes gentes ; laudate Eum, omnes populi.

1. We should ask of God, with Our Lord, that His name may be glorified throughout all the earth : *Et fiet unum ovile et unus pastor.*—Joan. x.

2. Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia Ejus, et Veritas Domini manet in æternum.

2. *Taceat, Domine, laudes Tuas qui miserationes Tuas non considerat.*—S. Aug. The Incarnation was the pledge of the goodness and truthfulness of God ; Pentecost put the seal to it. Let us preserve the fruit of these mysteries whilst communicating them to others.

\* " Psalmus ille compendio suæ locutionis exsuperat, et cum sit atomis aliorum, puncti refert dignitatem a quo linea oritur. Nihil enim amplius dici potest quam ut Creator debeat toto orbe laudari."—Cassiod., *in hunc. psalm.*

*The Canticle of the Blessed Virgin.*

The first canticle and first prophecy of the New Law. Saint Ambrose calls it the ecstasy of the humility of Mary; it is also the hymn of Her gratitude. It is divided into two equal parts; in the first five verses the Blessed Virgin gives thanks to the Lord for having chosen Her to be the Mother of His Son; in the last five She describes in grand terms the effects of the Incarnation on the world and the perfections which God manifests in this mystery.

1. Magnificat anima mea  
Dominum.

2. Et exultavit spiritus meus  
in Deo salutari meo.

3. Quia respexit humili-  
tatem ancillæ Suæ: ecce enim

1. *Dominum*: Mary sees nothing great but the Lord; She esteems, praises, and admires Him only: *Ubi dicit Dominum jam se prædicat ancillam.*—S. Antoninus.

2. Elizabeth had said: *Exultavit in gaudio infans in utero meo.* Mary replies: *Exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari; Salvatore.* She is not insensible of Her salvation, of the graces which She receives, to the glory awaiting Her; but She thinks above all of Her Saviour, of the love which He merits, of the tenderness which He shows Her, of the incomparable manner in which She possesses Him.

3. *Respexit: Ille respexit in me non ego in Eum.*—Theoph.

ex hoc beatum me dicent omnes generationes.

*Respexit : Non virginitatem, innocentiam, sed humilitatem—parvitatē—Ancillæ.* It was in taking the title of Servant that Mary merited that of Mother.—Luc i. *Ecce ex hoc . . .* an astonishing prophecy which continues and is verified daily. *Benedicta tu* say all Christians to Her.

4. Quia fecit mihi magna Qui potens est et sanctum nomen Ejus.

4. There is a humility founded upon our nothingness, and this is but cold, says S. Bernard ; but there is another which has for principle the knowledge of God and His Love : this humility ravishes and transports—it is that of the Blessed Virgin—*Fecit magna* : A God-Man and a Mother of God, what more wonderful !

5. Et misericordia Ejus a progenie in progenies timen-  
tibus Eum.

5. It was not for Herself only that the Son of God was born of Her ; but She enjoys through charity those good things which He desires to communicate to men through Her. The reign of grace and mercy is about to begin.

6. Fecit potentiam in brachio Suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis Sui.

6. Mary here begins to speak of the effects of the Incarnation—*Fecit* : the past for the present according to the custom of the prophets. *In brachio*,

not *in digito*—*in manu*, but *in brachio*, by His Incarnate Word—*superbos*: the demons, the rebellious Jews, figured by Pharaoh and his army in the going out of Egypt.

7. Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.

7. What was then done will not cease to be done in the world; the abasements of the Divine Word will ever have for its effect the confusion of the proud and exaltation of the humble—*Judæorum ejec-tionem et gentium introductionem innuit*.—S. Greg. Thaum.

8. Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes.

8. *Divites: Judæi*.—*Esurientes: Gentiles præcipue*. It is by Mary that this hunger is satisfied and that souls receive their food.

9. Suscepit Israel puerum Suum recordatus misericordiæ Suæ.

9. *Suscepit subveniendo. Israel: Israel Dei*.—Gal. vi. *Recordatus misericordiæ*: The foundation of our happiness is the Mercy of God and His promises.

10. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in sæcula.

10. Mary speaks for all of us; for Abraham is the *father of all believers*, and the promises he received extend to all his children: *Benedicentur in semine Tuo omnes gentes terræ*.—Gen. xxii. We should reflect that we form in Jesus Christ but one

same Body animated by the same spirit and called to the like happiness: *Gentes cohæredes et concorporales et participes promissionis ejus in Christi Jesu.*—Eph. iii.



## CHAPTER II.

### COMPLINE.

#### § I.

THE recitation of Compline is usually joined to that of Vespers. Still the precise hour for which this part of the Office was instituted is the last of the day ; and in the early ages, that is to say towards the sixth century, it was generally said by torch-light when about to retire for repose.\* Accordingly, the idea of death which the end of day brings,† the remembrance of the tomb, of which night is the image, divers allusions to the agony and burial of Our Lord—*in manus Tuas . . . . in pace, etc.*—shed over all the prayers of Compline a holy melancholy and sombre tint, happily tempered by a ray of Christian hope.

\* *Completorium* : finishing, crowning. We learn from William of Nangis that S. Louis, King of France, had a particular devotion to this Hour—"Volebat quod ejus liberi essent cum ipso ad completorium, quod post cœnam suam quotidie solemniter decantari faciebat."—*Vita S. Ludov.* Madam Legras, when superioress of the Sisters of Charity, recommending the soul of her husband to an ecclesiastic, besought him to remember him at Compline "on account of the devotion he himself used to have in reciting daily this Hour in order to obtain a happy death".—*Vie I. iii.* See P. Durante de Boncrueil, *Esprit de l'Eglise dans la recitation des Complies*, 1734.

† *Væ mihi*, says a prophet, *quia declinavit dies, quia longiores factæ sunt horæ diei.*—*Jer. vi. 4.*

From its beginning, re-uniting all these thoughts we earnestly beg a double grace, a peaceful night and a holy death: *Noctem quietam et finem perfectum*. And, for fear we may give way to an imprudent feeling of security, the Church reminds us by the voice of the apostle that we are never secure here below, that darkness is the time of snares, and that we can never be too watchful in presence of an unsleeping foe whose hate is unsatiable. It is in this view and with this impression that we should recite the *Pater Noster* and the *Confiteor*. We should call for the aid of God and dispose ourselves by acts of humility and repentance to a full submission to all the designs of His providence. For the Church does not forget our frailty, and She wishes Her ministers to remember it ever in the midst of their most solemn actions. Not content with requiring us to say, in a low voice, at the beginning of each Hour, *Dimitte nobis debita nostra*, . . . . She now obliges us to loudly confess before our brethren, at the day's close as at its beginning, that we have sinned *through our fault, through our fault, through our exceeding great fault*. These prayers require to be said with a profound sentiment of humility and with a lively desire after an ever-increasing purity of heart.\* The

\* "We always," says S. Augustine, "should acknowledge ourselves sinners, and avow that we sin almost every moment. Ecclesiastics or laymen, religious or secular matters not: *Clericus sis licet; episcopus sis, homo es; apostolus sis, homo es. Vocem apostoli audi—Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus nos ipsos seducemus.*"—*Serm. cxiv., No. 4.* "For myself,"—we read in a discourse attributed to the same doctor on the anniversary of his consecration—"I confess I often feel trouble of mind and reproach of conscience. For example, if it has happened that I have driven away an importunate petitioner; if I have shown myself wanting in affability or too little indulgent; if I have added by a thoughtless reply to the troubles of an agitated soul; if I have put off till

*Converte nos* comes naturally after this confession. It reminds us that God is our only end ; that our principal interest is not to turn ourselves away from Him, but that we can only approach Him by the help of His grace and by fidelity to His inspirations.

The antiphon *Miserere* indicates the spirit in which the four following psalms should be said. These psalms, which recall by their number the four ends of man, admirably express the sentiments with which the approach of night and the thought of death should inspire the Christian soul.

What confidence and love is there not in this xli<sup>st</sup> psalm which S. Augustine so much loved to repeat after his conversion.\* But it is in union with Our Lord that we must say these words : *Exaudivit me Deus justitiæ meæ. . . . Filii hominum usquequo gravi corde ? Scitote quoniam mirificavit Dominus Sanctum suum. . . . In pace in idipsum dormiam.*

The whole of the following psalm, xxx., is not recited. By a singular exception a stop occurs after these words of the sixth verse, the last which Our Lord pronounced on the cross : *In manus Tuas commendo spiritum meum.* Thus the Church invites us to finish each of our days

another time, or sorrowed by a severe look, some poor person whose solicitations wearied me ; if I have been indignant because suspected of a fault which, after all, I was, as a man, quite capable of committing : or if I have entertained suspicions of a similar character against any one else, I am obliged to own myself at fault. I acknowledge my wrongs towards my brethren ; may they pardon me that they also may receive pardon : *Dimittite, ut dimittantur nobis.*"—*Serm. clxxxiii. ; cf. Epist. iii., ad victorian.*

\* "Vellem ut intuerentur faciem meam et audirent voces meas, quando legi psalmum iv. : *Cum invocarem.* O, si videunt internum lumen quod ego, legem hæc foris et agnoscens intus !" — *Conf. IX., iv. 3, 11.*

as Jesus Christ ended His life, and to offer ourselves in sacrifice to His Father with the same trust and submission.

To the words of resignation succeeds the song of hope. The psalm xc.: *Qui habitat*, tends to encourage the soul of the just against the terrors of the last struggle. The Holy Ghost opposes to the fear of the devil, the assurance of an all-powerful protection on the part of God and His holy angels. *Angelis suis mandavit de Te. . . . Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis.* It seems that the first words, *Qui habitat in adjutorio Altissimi*, or, as the commentators translate it *in sanctuario*, in recalling to the priest the psalm chanted over him at his first consecration to God: *Quis ascendet in montem Domini? aut quis stabit in loco sancto Ejus?*\* give him the right to apply to himself in a particular manner the consoling assurances contained in it.† At the last psalm: *Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum*, the minister of the Lord, regretting his inability to prolong his prayer any further, consoles himself with the thought that fervent religious people on earth and thousands of angels and saints in heaven will continue to praise and bless the Divine Majesty.‡ In the

\* *Ps. xxiii.*

† Father Coter, a Jesuit, received the last sacraments a few moments before his death with a consolation and joy quite heavenly. He then asked that the goth psalm should be read to him, and at each verse he assured all the fathers assembled around him that the words of the psalmist had been fully accomplished in his person. When these words, *Longitudine dierum replebo eum*, were recited, he said: "I have lived eighty years and I have constantly been the object of the most wonderful providence". . . . When the psalm was finished, *Et ostendam illi salutare Dei*, "Here," said he, "is what remains for me to obtain, but I look for it with confidence in the mercy of God". Shortly after this he passed away in peace.—P. Poiré.

‡ "Millia millium ministrabant Ei et decies millies centena millia ministrabant Ei."—*Dan. vii. 10.* "The weakness of our nature and the work of the ministry

impossibility he finds in joining his voice to their concert he unites more closely in thought with them, and after having exhorted them to praise eternally their common Master : *Ecce nunc benedicite* . . . he humbly asks for himself, and for the whole Church, the blessing of Him Who made heaven and earth. After the psalms comes the hymn. That of Compline, the inspiration of S. Ambrose is as touching as it is simple and short. In begging of God purity of soul and body we naturally think of that double purity in which Our Lord would be buried : *In sepulcro novo et in sindone munda*. In the little chapter and the responsory which follow, the priest reminds the Lord, with His prophet, or rather with the whole Church to whose sentiments he is giving utterance, that he is not a stranger to Him : *Domine Deus noster* . . . that he feels honoured by being consecrated to Him and bearing the name of His Son : *Nomen Tuum invocatum est super nos* . . . that he has been purchased at the price of His Blood : *Redemisti nos, Domine* . . . and that he has a right to reckon upon His most careful and efficacious Providence : *Ut pupillam oculi* . . .

Lastly, the psalmody closes in a solemn manner with a canticle of thanksgiving taken from the New Testa-

do not permit us to praise God at every moment, but nothing prevents us from remaining always united in heart to the perpetual praise of the Church. A priest, then, should never cease to adhere to the spirit that induces his brethren to glorify the Divine Majesty ; indeed, he ought to unite himself to all the homage paid to God in heaven. And as each saint in paradise in saying *Amen*, is thought to take part in the duties which the other happy spirits perform, so also it suffices for the priest to often say in the day *Amen, Amen* to associate himself with the praises which God receives here below from the other members of His Divine Son."—Olier, *Mystères de N.S. appliqués à la journée*.

ment. It is that which the holy old man Simeon \* spoke in the Temple, exulting to see, before he went down into the grave, the promised Redeemer, Who was the Pledge to him of a never-ending joy: *Vidit et gavisus est.*† May the priest of the New Law say with him these words: *In Spiritu,*‡ with the same sentiments of faith, detachment, and gratitude! May he never forget that he is the minister of Him Who was the joy of Simeon, Whom his eyes have seen, Whom his hands have touched, Whom his heart has received that very day, even Him Who is the Glory, the Light, and Salvation of all people! After the happiness of a vocation to the altar, worthily fulfilled, what other can be so much desired than the possession of God in the clear vision of heaven? "Truly," said S. Francis de Sales, in alluding to this canticle, "provided this Divine Saviour be with me I care not into what world I may go."§ Then, at the moment of ending the Office, the Church recalls to Her ministers the remembrance of the Blessed Virgin, and as She requires them to invoke Her help at the beginning of all the Hours, She puts them under Her protection at the end of the Office by an anthem which recalls the mystery of the season, and the share this Divine Mother had in it. These anthems, which are the fruits of an ardent and pure devotion, should leave in the soul the most pleasing and

\* Simeon id est *exauditio, exauditus*. Most of the fathers suppose that he was a priest, and S. Luke says that he blessed the Blessed Virgin and S. Joseph (ii. 28).

† *Joan. viii. 56.*

‡ "Et venit Simeon in Spiritu in templum."—*Luc. ii. 27.* "*Senex puerum portabat, puer autem senem regebat.*"—Missale.

§ Letter cvi. a S. Chantal.—*Lettres inéd., t. ii.*



wholesome thoughts. Thus we do not separate what God has united, but ever temper the respectful fear due to the Son with the confidence and tenderness inspired by the love of the Mother.

## § II. AD COMPLETORIUM.

℣. Jube, Domine, benedicere. ℞. Noctem quietam et finem perfectum concedat nobis Dominus Omnipotens.

Fratres, sobrii estote et vigilate quia adversarius vester diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit quærens quem devoret: cui resistite fortes in fide. Tu autem, etc.

℣. Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini. ℞. Qui fecit cælum et terram.\*

*Finem perfectum.* A good death—Sleep is the image of death; when the time for sleep comes, ask for grace to be well prepared when this life shall end, and when we hope to enter upon our eternal rest.

I. Peter v. A warning rather than an instruction; but one very suitable.—*Sobrii.* Temperate, moderate in all things—*Vigilate:* There is a watchfulness which should never cease. *Dormio et cor meum vigilat.*—Cant. v. *Adversarius vester*, the same as the word Satan. Having only one evil to fear—sin—we have but one enemy the Tempter.—*In fide.* Nothing strengthens us like a lively and firm faith. *Per fidem vicerunt regna.*—Hebr. xi.

Woe to him who puts any trust in himself and in his works.

\* The forty martyrs, whose feast is on the 10th March, having resisted every torment began to recite together the 123rd psalm from which these words are taken. When they had come to the last verses: *Laqueus contritus est et nos liberati sumus: Adjutorium, etc.*, they gave up their souls to God.

Pater. Confiteor.

*Confitemini alterutrum peccata vestra*, says S. James v. The Church makes us follow this counsel twice a day: in the morning at Prime, and according to these words of the Psalmist: *Mane astabo Tibi et videbo quoniam non Deus volens iniquitatem Tu es*; and in the evening, according to this other verse: *Quæ dicitis in cordibus vestris*, etc. When striking the breast remember the publican. —Luc. xviii. 13. *Fundere pectus quid est nisi arguere quod latet in pectore et evidenti pulsu occultum castigare peccatum?* — S. Aug. *in hunc loc.*

℣. Converte nos, Deus, salutaris noster. ℞. Et averte iram Tuam a nobis. Deus in adjutorium, etc.

*Converte nos.* . . . Ps. lxxiv. Words as fitly placed at the end of the Office as the *Domine labia* at the beginning: *A vitiis ad virtutem, ab exterioribus ad interiora.*—The labours of the day cause us distractions and too often make us forget the one thing needful. The approach of night recalls our thoughts and reminds us of God by the consideration of death.

#### *Psalm IV.*

(See this Psalm at Matins, 2nd Nocturn, *supra*, p. 301.)

Our Lord and the saints exhort us to examine our-

selves and to renounce everything for union with God alone.

1. Cum invocarem exaudivit me Deus justitiæ meæ : in tribulatione dilatasti mihi.

2. Miserere mei et exaudi orationem meam.

3. Filii hominum usquequo gravi corde? ut quid diligitis vanitatem et quæritis mendacium?

4. Et scitote quoniam mirificavit Dominus sanctum Suum : Dominus exaudiet me cum clamavero ad Eum.

5. Irascimini et nolite peccare : \* quæ dicitis in cordi-

1. *Cum* and not *postquam*. God does not make us wait : *Invocabis, et dicet : Ecce adsum*.—Is. lviii. *Invocare, vocare intus*.—S. Aug. *Exaudivit*: Our prayers during the day have not been in vain.—*Dilatasti*, God does not take away trials, but He renders them easy for those who pray.

2. The graces we have received encourage us to pray and excite us to praise God. *Invoca Me in die tribulationis : eruam te et honorificabis Me*.—Ps. xlix.

3. *Filii hominum*, says the Psalmist : are the children of God less wise and less attached to creatures? *utquid?* . . . It is this that prevents us from praying well.

4. *Scitote*. It is now time to think of it, for the last hour is at hand. The glory into which Our Lord has entered by His Death is the pledge of that which is offered to us and which we may obtain by prayer.

5. *Irascimini : contra peccatum, vanitatem, mendacium*.

\* Louis VII. hearing of the anger of Henry II., king of England, against S. Thomas of Canterbury, could not avoid remarking—"Before going so far

bus vestris, in cubilibus vestris compungimini.

6. Sacrificate sacrificium justitiæ et sperate in Domino; multi dicunt: Quis ostendit nobis bona?

7. Signatum est super nos lumen vultus Tui Domine: dedisti lætitiā in corde meo.

8. A fructu frumenti, vini et olei sui multiplicati sunt.

We must not sin through anger nor be irritated except by sin. Let not the repose of night, above all let not death find aught in our hearts but charity and compunction.

6. It is at eventide chiefly that the Lord wills that we should offer Him the sacrifice of expiation by the incense of prayer, which His justice demands.

7. *Signatum est*: Thanksgiving for the favours we asked for at Prime. *Et sit splendor Domini Dei nostri super nos: Dedisti lætitiā.* True joy, the joy of the heart comes necessarily from God: *Fecisti nos ad Te Deus! . . .*

8. S. Augustine, regarding the bread, wine and oil as matter of the sacraments, applies these words to the faithful disciples of Our Lord: *A fructu frumenti, vini et olei sui multiplicati, in pace Christi requiescunt.* But it refers rather to worldlings and to the vain objects of their complacency.

my brother would have done well to remember the advice of the Psalmist: *Irascimini et nolite peccari.* My lord, said one of the envoys of the holy Archbishop, he would no doubt have remembered it were he assiduous as you at the Office."—Jervasi Doroborn, *Chronica*, 1122-1199.

9. In pace inidipsum  
dormiam et requiescam.

10. Quoniam Tu Domine,  
singulariter in spe constituisti  
me.

9. *There is the end, there is*  
*repose, there is the never-*  
*ceasing good : O in pace ! O*  
*inidipsum ! O quid dixit ?*  
*Tu es idipsum valde Qui non*  
*mutaris, et in Te requies.*—S.  
Aug., Conf. ix.

10. Happy those whom God  
inspires with so peaceful a con-  
fidence ! They see their years  
roll by like their days, without  
disturbance and without regret.

### *Psalm XXX.*

Sentiments of Our Lord at the time of His Passion.  
Sentiments of the saints in their afflictions and trials.

1. In Te Domine, speravi ;  
non confundar in æternum ;  
in justitia Tua libera me.

2. Inclina ad me aurem  
Tuam, accelera ut eruas me.

3. Esto mihi in Deum  
protectorem, et in domum  
refugii ut salvum me facias.

4. Quoniam fortitudo mea  
et refugium meum es Tu ; et  
propter nomen Tuum de-

1. *In Te :* Here is repeated  
what was said at the end of  
Matins—Christian hope cannot  
deceive. God has promised  
that it shall not be confounded ;  
this His justice requires no  
less than His truth.

2. *Inclina aurem :* We could  
not elevate ourselves to God ;  
He lowers Himself to us to  
hear us and help us.

3. Here is the refuge of  
faithful souls. *Non rapiet eos*  
*quisquam de manu Mea*, saith  
the Lord.—John x.

4. We fall if God does not  
bear us up ; we wander if He  
does not guide us ; we die of

duces me et enutries me.

5. Educes me de laqueo hoc quem absconderunt mihi, quoniam Tu es protector meus.

6. In manus Tuas commendo spiritum meum : redemisti me Domine Deus veritatis.\*

hunger if He does not provide for our wants.

5. The greatest dangers are those that are hidden ; it is God only Who can preserve our souls from them.

6. Words doubly divine for the use Our Lord has made of them. May we repeat them with Him in our last moments !

### *Psalm XC.†*

Jesus Christ expresses the sentiments with which the providence of His Father inspires Him both in regard to Himself and His saints.

1. Qui habitat in adjutorio Altissimi, in protectione Dei cœli commorabitur.

2. Dicit Domino : Susceptor meus es Tu et refugium meum : Deus meus sperabo in Eum.

3. Quoniam Ipse liberavit me de laqueo venantium et a verbo aspero.

1. A soul is unshaken when it has God for its support. *Si Deus pro nobis quis contra nos ?* —Rom. viii.

2. To be certain of this help we must place all our trust in Him and return thanks for all His favours.

3. In fact the past answers for the future. *A verbo aspero :* From all affliction. *Verbum :* A general term applied to all kinds of things.

\* "Sanctus Nicolaus, Myrae Episcopus, cum instante morte suspiciens in cœlum Angelos sibi occurrentes intueretur, illo psalmo pronuntiato : *In Te, Domine, speravi*, usque ad eum locum ; *In manus Tuas commendo spiritum meum* in cœlestem patriam migravit."—*Offic. S. Nich.*, 10 Dec., lect. iv.

† Upon this psalm may be consulted the commentary by S. Bernard and twelve instructions of Bellarmine at the college of Louvain in 1577.



4. Scapulis Suis obumbrabit tibi et sub pennis Ejus sperabis.

5. Scuto circumdabit te veritas Ejus ; non timebis a timore nocturno.

6. A sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris ab incursu et demonio meridiano.

7. Cadent a latere tuo mille et decem millia a dextris tuis ; ad te autem non appropinquabit.

8. Verumtamen oculis tuis considerabis et retributionem peccatorum videbis.

9. Quoniam Tu es, Domine spes mea ; altissimum posuisti refugium Tuum.

10. Non accedet ad te malum, et flagellum non appropinquabit tabernaculum tuum.

11. Quoniam angelis Suis

4. Here the psalmist continues.—Tenderness of God for His children : *Si gallina protegit pullos sub alis, quanto magis tutus eris sub alis Dei ?*—S. Aug.

5. Our soul is ever in danger ; but if she place her trust in God He will protect her against all her enemies.

6. He will defend her by night and by day against hidden foes as well as against open dangers. *Meridiano : diurno.*

7. We should learn by our neighbour's fall, to become more humble and more grateful to God : *Nisi quia Dominus erat in nobis dicat nunc Israel.* Ps. cxxiii.

8. On the day of judgment this spectacle shall be presented to us : *Et tempus omnis rei tunc.*—Eccli. iii.

9. As if it had been : *Quoniam dixisti : Tu es Domine. . .* Because you have placed your trust in God, and have chosen Him for your refuge.

10. Afflictions are favours, not punishments, for God's friends : *Co-operantur in bonum.*—Rom. viii.

11. Words of the tempter in

mandavit de te, ut custodiant  
te in omnibus viis tuis.

12. In manibus portabunt  
te, ne forte offendas ad  
lapidem pedem tuum.

13. Super aspidem et basi-  
liscum ambulabis et concul-  
cabis leonem et draconem.

14. Quoniam in Me spera-  
vit, liberabo eum : protegam  
eum quoniam cognovit nomen  
Meum.

15. Clamabit ad Me et Ego  
exaudiam eum : cum ipso  
sum in tribulatione ; eripiam  
eum et glorificabo eum.

16. Longitudine dierum  
replebo eum et ostendam  
illi salutare Meum.

the desert ; they should remind  
us of Our Lord's reply : Confi-  
dence in God is not presump-  
tion.

12. God's goodness to our  
souls. We ought to have a  
solicitude like that of the holy  
angels for the salvation of our  
brethren.

13. Asp and basilisk : the  
devil and his supporters.—Luke  
x. *Pugnavit Ecclesia adversus  
leonem ; pugnat nunc adversus  
draconem.*—S. Aug.

14. Words of God : He con-  
firms what has just been said  
to His faithful servant.—Hope  
in God shows that we know  
His perfections and believe in  
His promises.

15. To cry to God is to pray  
ardently : we do this ordinarily  
during suffering. When we are  
in tribulation, we are then in a  
special manner with God.

16. The life of the just is  
always long, because his days  
are well filled up and his  
soul is immortal.

### *Psalm CXXXIII.*

Our Lord exhorts His servants, especially His chosen  
ones, never to cease praising God.

1. Ecce nunc benedicite

1. *Nunc* : At this hour of

Dominum, omnes servi Domini.

2. Qui statis in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostri.

3. In noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta, et benedicite Dominum.

4. Benedicat te Dominus ex Sion, Qui fecit cœlum et terram.

night when public prayer ceases and the wicked are more free to sin — *Servi Domini: Beati servi Tui qui stant in conspectu Tuo semper*, said the Queen of Sheba to the son of David.—III. Kings x.

2. *Qui statis*: The angels especially and the saints whose course is finished. It is a consolation for a priest obliged to suspend his prayer to reflect that in heaven there is no interruption in the praises offered to the Divine Majesty.

3. *In noctibus*: During the hours of the night, during sleep, during all our life; for it is passed in darkness waiting for the clear vision.

4. Sion is Holy Church: *Accessistis ad Sion montem, et civitatem Dei Viventis Jerusalem cœlestem*—Hebr. xii. We should desire for ourselves and for all those blessings of which She possesses the source. May we always merit them when finishing the Office!

*Hymnus, Te lucis.*

*Capitulum.*

*Jerem. xiv.*

Tu autem in nobis Es Domine, et nomen sanctum

*In nobis Es*: Not only in the Church as in Thy kingdom and

Tuum invocatum est super nos : ne derelinquas nos, Domine, Deus noster.

R $\gamma$ . Deo gratias.

R $\gamma$ . In manus Tuas\* Domine, commendo spiritum meum.—In manus Tuas. . .

Ÿ. Redemisti nos Domine Deus veritatis. — In manus Tuas.

Ÿ. Custodi nos, Domine, ut pupillam oculi.

R $\gamma$ . Sub umbra alarum Tuarum protege nos.

in Thy sanctuary, but in each of us, as the soul of our soul and the life of our life. *Nomen Tuum invocatum est super nos* : We bear Thy name ; we are called Thy people, Thy ministers.

Another remembrance of our Saviour on the cross. The Church desires us to finish the day in union with Jesus Christ dying.

*Custodi : Custodivi te ne peccares in Me*, says the Lord in Gen. xx. *Sub umbra* : Allusion to the 4th verse of Psalm xc. *Scapulis Suis obumbrabit tibi.*

### *Canticum Simeonis.*

A song of thanksgiving for the grace of redemption.

1. Nunc dimittis servum Tuum, Domine, secundum verbum Tuum in pace.

1. Why cling to earth when we have done the only thing to be done and carry within us the pledge of heaven.

\* S. Stephen, protomartyr, gave up his soul to God pronouncing these words, after the example of our Saviour. Many saints have desired to die in the same manner : S. Basil, 379 (1 Jan.) ; S. Rupert, Bishop of Salzbou $\gamma$ , 623 (27 Mar.) ; S. John of Matha, institutor of the Trinitarians, 1214 (7 Feb.) ; S. Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253 (3 April) ; S. Hyacinth, 1257 (16 Aug.) ; S. Nicholas Tollentino, 1306 (10 Sept.) ; S. John Colombinus, 1357 (31 July) ; S. Vincent Ferrier, 1419 (5 April) ; S. Francis of Paula, 1507 (2 April) ; S. John of God, 1550 (8 March) ; S. Fr. Xavier, 1552 (2 Dec.), etc.—See D. Mabillon, *La mort chretienne*.

2. Quia viderunt oculi mei  
salutare Tuum.

3. Quod parasti ante  
faciem omnium populorum.

4. Lumen ad revelationem  
gentium et gloriam plebis Tuæ  
Israel.\*

*Ant.* Salva nos Domine,  
vigilantes, custodi nos dor-  
mientes, ut vigilemus cum  
Christo et requiescamus in  
pace.

2. *Oculis Christum deside-  
rantibus nihil aliud dignatus est  
aspicere.*—S. Jer. We possess  
our Saviour more perfectly than  
Simeon did; we hold Him in  
our hands; we offer Him to  
His Father; we receive Him  
into our hearts: *Beati oculi!*  
—Matt. xiii.

3. After having caused Him  
to be looked for during four  
thousand years God at last  
gave Him to the world for the  
salvation of all people.

4. The light of day fails and  
becomes extinguished; Jesus  
Christ the light of the world—  
*lux quam videbat Tobias.*—S.  
Aug.—shines forever, and every-  
where. May all eyes open to  
its brightness and profit by it  
to walk in the way to heaven.

*Vigilantes*: Allusion and an-  
swer to the counsel of S. Peter.  
*Sobrii estote. . . . Custodi nos :*  
*Non dormitabit neque dormiet*  
*Qui custodit Israel.*—Ps. cxx.  
*Vigilemus cum Christo*: To  
watch with Him is to remain  
attentive to His will and to  
direct our affections towards  
Him.

\* S. Eloi died whilst finishing this canticle, 659 (1st December). Likewise  
Adhelard, abbot of Corbie, 827 (2nd Jan.).

*Oremus.\** Visita quæsumus Domine, habitationem istam et omnes insidias inimici ab ea longe repelle; Angeli Tui habitent in ea qui nos in pace custodiant et benedictio Tua sit super nos semper. Per Dominum nostrum.

*Visita :* Happy the house which our Saviour visits. *Salus domni huic facta est.*—Luc. xix. *Insidias . . . repelle :* Thoughts calculated to inspire both watchfulness and peace. *Angeli :* Allusion to Ps. xc. *Angelis Suis mandavit :* The angels count it an honour to serve those whom Christ has purchased, and who are destined to be heirs of His kingdom. *Nonne omnes sunt administratorii spiritus in ministerium missi propter eos qui hæreditatem capient salutis ?*—Hebr. i.

Ÿ. Benedicamus Domino.

God can never be sufficiently praised : *Lingua ad horam laudat : vitam semper laudet.*—S. Aug.

R̃. Deo gratias.

This response was for long in Christian countries the ordinary form of salutation. *Quo nec dici brevius, nec audiri lætius, nec intelligi grandius, nec agi fructuosius potest ?*—S. Aug.

*Bened.* Benedicat et custodeat nos omnipotens et misericors Dominus, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus. Amen.

*Benedicat :* after *Benedicamus*. It seems we hear Jacob saying to the Lord, at the end of his vision : *Non dimittam Te donec benedixeris mihi.*—Gen. xxxii.

\* "The prayers that terminate Compline, like those ending Prime, never alter, to show," says a writer, "that the beginning and end of every action should always be referred to God, equally and in the same manner."



F. Alvares never pronounced the names of the Three Divine Persons but with marks of the greatest recollection and respect. One day, when he made the sign of the cross in thus naming Them, he had the happiness to see himself blessed by the hand of God.\*

*Anthems of the Blessed Virgin.*

We read in the life of S. Bonaventure that every evening, after Compline, he desired that the monastery bell should ring to remind the faithful to salute our Lady in union with the angel Gabriel. Many also attribute to him this custom of ending the Office with an anthem to Her, a custom certainly in vogue among the friars minors at the beginning of the thirteenth century.†

*From Trinity to Advent.*

Salve,‡ Regina.

*Regina* : Queen of heaven and earth, of men and angels.  
*Tot serviunt Virgini quot Creatori.*—Gueric abb.

Mater misericordiæ.

The Father of the Incarnate

\* *Life*, by F. Dupont, c. vi.

† See *Annales*, 1249, Lettre de Jean de Parme.

‡ The honour of its composition is commonly attributed to Herman Contract, a benedictine of Richeneau, in Suabia, towards the middle of the eleventh century. This monk owed, to an extraordinary favour of the Mother of God, those doctrinal lights which made him a prodigy in his time. According to others it was a bishop of Puy, Adhémar de Monteil, one of the member of the Council of Clermont, who composed this anthem before starting for the crusade.—Albéric, *Chroniq.*—D. Rivet, t. viii.

Vita, Dulcedo, et Spes  
nostra, salve.

Ad Te clamamus exules,  
filii Evæ. Ad Te suspiramus  
gementes et flentes in hac  
lacrymarum valle.

Eia ergo, Advocata nostra,  
illos Tuos misericordes ocu-  
los ad nos converte.

Et Jesum benedictum Fruc-  
tum ventris Tui nobis post  
hoc exilium ostende.\*

Word is the *Father of Mercies*.  
—II. Cor. i. The Mother of  
the Saviour must also be a  
Mother of Mercy.

*Vita*: The Divine Life of  
our Saviour was given in an  
incomparable measure to Mary  
that She might communicate  
it to us. This is why the  
Church applies to Her these  
words of wisdom: *Ego mater  
sanctæ spei*.—Eccli. xxii. *Qui  
Me invenerit, inveniet vitam et  
hauriet salutem a Domino*.—  
Prov. viii.

Sons of Eve by nature we  
are children of Mary by grace,  
and we should consider our-  
selves in exile so long as we  
are away from Her.

*Filioli, hæc peccatorum scala,  
hæc maxima mea fiducia est, hæc  
tota ratio spei meæ. . . . Nihil  
austum in Maria nihil terri-  
bile: tota suavis est omnibus*.—  
S. Bern.

*Benedictum fructum*: Words  
of S. Elizabeth.—Luke ii. *Nobis  
ostende*: It is She who showed

\* S. John of God was one day reciting the *Salve* before a statue of Our Lady of Guadeloupe in Estremadura, which he had come to visit. At this word *ostende*, the veil that covered the statue opened of itself and the image of the Mother of God presented itself to his gaze.—*Act Sanct.*, 8 March. See in the additions made by S. Theresa in her Life the account of a favour which she received at Abila during the chanting of the *Salve*.

O clemens, o pia, O dulcis  
Virgo Maria.

Him to the world, to the shepherds and to the Magi.

According to the Chronicles of Spire, Saint Bernard having entered the church of that town, at the moment they were finishing the anthem, he added, as if by inspiration, these three invocations which have been ever since repeated. A brass plate in the pavement indicates the spot where the holy doctor stood; and every year the anthem is solemnly sung there in his honour.

*From Advent to the Purification.*

Alma Redemptoris mater\*  
quæ pervia cœli  
Porta manes et stella maris  
succurre cadenti  
Surgere qui curat populo:  
Tu quæ genuisti,  
Natura mirante Tuum sanctum  
Genitorem,  
Virgo prius ac posterius  
Gabrielis ab ore  
Sumens illud Ave peccatorum  
miserere.

Hexameters of which all the words, borrowed from the holy Doctors S. Fulgentius, S. Epiphanius, S. Iraneus, etc., have for their object the praise of the Divine Maternity of Mary, and the invoking of Her merciful goodness—*Alma quæ alit nutritia.*—*Porta Cœli: de qua Jacob dixit: Vere non est hic aliud nisi domus Dei et porta cœli.*—S. And. Cret. *Succurre cadenti*, compassion for sinners. *Plorabunt sacerdotes*,

\* The author of this Anthem is unknown, though it, like the former, is by most writers assigned to Herman Contract.—Trithem, *de Script. Eccles. cccxxi.* See *Annus Marianus*, by F. D. Cleich, t. ii., Augustæ Nindelicorum, 1746.

*ministri Domini et dicent: Parce Domine.*—Joel. ii. *Sumens illud Ave.* You who have merited to receive such a message.

*From the Purification to Easter.*

<p>Ave, Regina cœlorum*          Ave, Domina angelorum          Salve Radix, salve Porta          Ex qua mundo Lux estorta.          Gaude, Virgo gloriosa,          Super omnes speciosa          Vale o valde decora          Et pronobis Christum exora.          V̄. Dignare me laudare Te,          etc.</p>	<p>These eight lines, the author of which is unknown, celebrates the heavenly royalty of Mary, Her pre-eminence above the hierarchies of the angels, and the incomparable grace She has conferred upon the world. It is like a <i>salvo</i> of applause composed of the finest eulogium inspired by the piety of holy Doctors — S. Athanasius, S. Ephrem, S. Ildefonsus, etc.</p>
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*For Paschal Time.*

<p>Regina cœli, lætare, alleluia.          Quia Quem meruisti portare, alleluia.          Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia.          Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.          V̄. Divinum auxilium maneat semper nobiscum.</p>	<p>The transport of a holy soul who is devoted to Mary, and who partakes of Her joy at the sight of Her Risen and Glorified Son. The three first verses have, according to tradition, a celestial origin; the last was added by S. Gregory the Great.†</p>
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\* The insertion of this Anthem in the Office of the Church is due to Clement VI., 1350.—*Card. Turrecrem.* But it dates farther back.

† In 596, during Paschal time, a horrible pestilence was ravaging Rome, and the Pope, S. Gregory, called the people to penance and appointed a procession. The day having come, he came himself at dawn to the Church of *Ara Cœli*, and

Ry. Amen.

Some referring these words to the preceding Anthems understand by this *divine succour* the Blessed Virgin Who is called, in the Litany, *Auxilium Christianorum*. A pious but not a literal sense.

taking in his hands the picture of the Blessed Virgin, said to have been painted by S. Luke, he proceeded to S. Peter's, followed by the clergy and a numerous crowd. But all of a sudden, whilst passing the Castle of Adrian, voices were heard in the air that sang: *Regina*, etc. The Pontiff, astonished and enraptured, replies with the people: *Ora pro nobis Deum alleluia*. At the same moment an angel, brilliant with light, is seen replacing his sword in the scabbard, and the plague ceased from that day.—Sigon., *t. i., de Regno Italico*. Besides this angelic chant, inserted in the Liturgy, various monuments and commemorative customs attest the reality of the miracle upon the spot where it occurred. We may cite the statue of S. Michael, placed above Adrian's Castle, which then took the name of Castle S. Angelo; the inscription, *Regina cæli lætare*, placed in the roof of the *Ara Cæli*, above the altar, and the duty which the religious of *Ara Cæli* are under of singing this anthem, whenever processions or public prayers take place before their Church.

## CONCLUSION.

HERE, while we bring our task to a close, let us renew the prayers we made when beginning it. May this work contribute to increase a study, esteem, and love of the Divine Office. May it be of some little aid to priests in preserving them from the effects of routine, and may it induce them to worthily discharge the glorious and important duty of Public Prayer !

For ourselves, we thank God for the satisfaction He has allowed us to feel in compiling it. "It is a solace for a sick man," says Tertullian, when beginning his "Praise of Patience," "to entertain himself with a consideration of the advantages of health ; must it not then be a consolation for the soul,—even of the least perfect,—to reflect upon the virtues she desires to possess and the practice to which she feels she is called?" Moreover, there is a special enjoyment in the study of the Office which is attached to the subject ; it is like that which we feel in the admiration of a masterpiece or in the possession of a treasure. Such is the twofold impression which our work has left upon our soul. The more we have studied this Divine Office the more perfect has it seemed to us ; worthy of God Whose greatness it praises ; worthy of the Church whose work it is ; worthy of the Priesthood whose light and daily nourishment it should be. The more precious also have we found it ; rich in heavenly teaching, fertile in elevated and holy thoughts:



*Infinitus thesaurus est.\** So much so, that, without presuming to teach those more enlightened than ourselves, we do desire to awaken upon this subject the attention of all our brethren; and we would desire to say for the last time to them the Divine Office is, in truth, the very food of the priest's life: *liber vitæ*. It is filled with the spirit of God—Our Lord's Heart as it were beats within it: *Digitus Dei est hic.†* If you doubt our words, study it yourselves; for you will then love it, and relish it as it deserves; and it will become for you what it has ever been for all good priests: the food, light and life of your souls. *Bibe aquam de cisterna Tua, et fluenta, putei Tui deriventur foras.‡*

\* *Sap. vii. 14.*

† *Exod. viii. 19; John i. 16.* Cf. Mabillon, *de Cursu gallicano*, § vi. 75. Nicholas, *Art de Croné*, t. ii. 96.

‡ *Prov. v. 15.*

## NOTES.

### NOTE I.—*Antiquity of the Divine Office.*

In 1536 the Faculty of Theology of Paris censured this proposition : *Tempore Christi non erant Horæ canonicæ* ; joining to its censure the following observation : *Certum est Ecclesiam, Spiritu Sancto suggerente, Horas instituisse canonicas, quæ a Christo, Apostolis, primis qui eorum successoribus, primævum suam sumpserent originem.*\*

We find in fact in the oldest writings of the fathers and in the earliest monuments of ecclesiastical history unmistakable traces of public prayer, and even the very names of the principal Hours. It is not only in the fourth and third centuries that proofs abound,† but also in the second century,‡ and even in the apostolic times and in the inspired books.§

The custom of praying at certain times of the day by reciting psalms and prayers existed among the Jews long before the

\* D'Argentré, ii. 128.

† S. Aug., *Ep. liv., c. 18, etc.* ; S. Chrys., *Hom. de Precat, Exposit in ps. cxxxiv., in ps. cxlix ; in illud : Lauda anima mea Dominum, etc.* ; S. Athan., *ad Marcell. lib. de Psall.* ; S. Cypr., *Ep. ad Cæcil, de Orat. Dom., etc.* ; Orig., *de Orat. xii.* ; S. Damas., *Off. sixth lec., 11 Decr.* ; Acta S. Theodoti, *a S. Nilo, 18 May, etc.*

‡ S. Just. *Ep. ad Zen., Dial. cum Tryph.* ; Const. Apost. ii. 59, viii. 34 ; Acta S. Eudox, *Mart, etc.*

§ *Act iii. 1, x. 9, xvi. 25 ; Eph. v. 18 ; Col. iii. 16.*

coming of Our Lord.\* Accustomed to this practice during the life of their Master, the apostles continued to conform to it after Pentecost ; and when they had broken off all communication with the Synagogue, they showed themselves in public and private still more constant, in their religious observances.†

Not that they distinguished at that time so many Hours as are observed now-a-days, nor that they recited the same psalms. Tierce, Sexte, and None are alone mentioned in the first century. During the third, the Hours of morning and evening Prime and Vespers were added.

It is not till a little later,—after the persecutions,—that we find the principal Hour,—that of the night,—everywhere established and in daily use. At this time the Office takes a regular form, it becomes settled and completes its development ; the Scripture lessons are joined to the psalms ; the authority of the Pope selects both the one and the other—it prescribes their order and fixes their number : *Divini Officii formula præsertim a Gelasio ac Gregorio primis constituta fuit.*‡

But in proportion as it becomes perfected, as a consequence even of its development, it becomes less in accordance with the habits of the faithful and tends the more to assume the character of a priestly function. So long as the common prayer was short and not too varied, all, lays and clerics, were eager to take part in it. When the number and duration of the Hours were almost doubled, when a part of the night as well as a part of the day had to be spent in the praises of God, attendance at the Office became less common, and the obligation to take part in it, or to supply for it in private, became restricted to ecclesiastics, and even to those in sacred Orders.§

\* I. Paral. xxii. 5, 6, xxiv. 1, 6, 7, xxix. 25, 30 ; II. Esd. xii. 35, 39.

† Acts iii. 1, iv. 24, x. 9, xvi. 13, 16, 25 ; I. Cor. xiv. 26.

‡ Bull of Pius V. *Quod a Nobis*.

§ Cf. S. Aug., *Serm. xlv. de Temp.*

What is the law which has imposed upon clerics, as a rigorous duty, the recitation of the Office? If it be a written law, it has not come down to us; but a great many decrees, and these very ancient, may be quoted which suppose it, or which provide for its due observance. It will suffice to relate here two passages—one of the third or of the fourth, the other of the seventh century—each of which implies the obligation of reciting the Office in private when public celebration of it is impracticable. *Si propter infideles impossibile est ad ecclesiam procedere*, say the apostolic constitutions, *in domo aliqua congregationem facies, Episcopo. Si neque in domo neque in ecclesia congregatio potest agitari, psallat sibi unusquisque, legat, precetur, vel duo simul, vel tres.\** *Quisquis clericorum hanc orationem dominicam aut in publico aut in privato officio præterierit, ordinis sui officio muletetur*, says the Fourth Council of Toledo (c. x.). Later, it was restricted to the ministers in sacred Orders.

Thus it may be said that the Divine Office began with the Church. As his Eminence, Cardinal Newman, wrote long before his conversion, our Breviary “is, as far as its substance and the distribution of the Hours, but a continuation of a system of prayers which dates from apostolic times”.† The principal modifications which it has at different times undergone, were made by S. Leo the Great, S. Gelasius, S. Gregory the Great, S. Gregory III., Adrian I., more particularly S. Gregory VII., and in the last place S. Pius V.‡

#### NOTE II.—*On Distractions.*

What we say of the baneful effects of laxity and routine is intended to promote a wholesome caution respecting these

\* *L. viii., c. xxxiv.*

† *Tracts for the Times, t. iii. 373.*

‡ *Cf. Thomassin, Discipline de l'Eglise, t. i. liv. ii. c. lxxii., etc. Grancolas, Commentaire historique sur le Breviaire—Conferences ecclesiastiques de la Rochelle sur l'Office Divin, etc.*

faults. It would be however far from our wish to inspire pious and timid souls with an exaggerated sentiment of the conditions required by the Office and of the responsibility which it involves.

I. The thought of God, more or less explicit, being an essential of all prayer, it necessarily follows that to pray well we should as much as possible avoid every thought incompatible with this.\* But another principle not less certain is this, that God only imputes our distractions to us and is offended by them, in so far as we willingly incur them or have given rise to them by some free and disordered act on our part. This remark should serve to reassure every one of good will and afford confidence to the most timid. In fact, is any pious ecclesiastic, who fears to offend God and who desires to please Him, much exposed in reciting the Office to yield himself wilfully to profane thoughts? Now, what is certain is that, should this danger present itself, it entirely depends upon himself to avoid it, and if his will falter, his conscience will not fail to warn him of it. As to distractions which we do not notice, and which at most could only be voluntary *in causa*, is there more reason for being uneasy about them? No. He who lives a pious life, and who adopts the ordinary precautions not to be disturbed by them, may live in peace; and whilst deploring the instability of his mind, and whilst seeking the perfection of recollectedness as of other virtues, he should see in the wanderings to which he is subject only a tribute paid to nature or the result of legitimate occupations which his state of life permits or even require.

II. Others again have no other motives to disturb them but the number and persistence of their distractions. They judge *a priori* that such unruliness in their ideas cannot be produced or prolonged without fault on their part and without displeasure

\* 22<sup>d</sup>e q. 83, art. 13.

to God. This is an error. They do not sufficiently consider and allow for the great mobility of the imagination ; they take too little account of the experience and teaching of the saints.

At last, O Lord, said David, that great man of prayer, behold, I have for a moment made myself master of my heart ! *Invenit servus Tuus cor suum ut oraret oratione hac :*\* upon which S. Augustine makes this remark—*Invenire si dicit cor suum, quasi soleret ab eo fugere et ille sequi.*† In fact, adds the holy doctor, is not this what every one experiences ? By how many motives are not our souls moved ! What vain thoughts consume our heart even in time of prayer ! *Vult se tenere ut stet et quodammodo fugit a se nec invenit canellos quibus se includat.*‡ Next to S. Augustine we will quote S. Jerome. To what are we not exposed, he observes, even in the holiest actions : *Creberrime in oratione mea, aut per porticum deambulo aut de fœnori computo, aut etiam quæ dictu erubescenda sunt gero.*§ S. Gregory the Great, after his elevation to the Papacy, says—*Redire ad cor desidero, sed vanis cogitationum tumultibus exclusus, redire non possum, etc.*|| S. Bernard, or the author of the Meditations attributed to him, speaks as follows—*Loquitur mihi Dominus in Psalmo, et ego Illi ; nec tamen, cum psalmum dico attendo Cujus sit psalmus. Deprecor Illum ut mihi intendat ; ego vero nec mihi nec Illi intendo* (c. viii.). S. Thomas Aquinas says—*Vix unum Pater noster potest homo dicere quin mens ad alia feratur.*¶ S. Peter Damian—*Non puto quod ille qui clausit cælum oratione clauserit animum a cogitatione.*\*\* The author of the Imitation thus—*Confiteor vere quia valde distracte me habere consuevi. Nam ibi multoties non sum, ubi corporaliter sto vel sedeo. Vix mediam expendere devote novi horam ; et utinam vel semel digne feri*

\* II. Kings viii. 28. † In Psalm lxxxv. 7. ‡ Ibid. § Dial. in Lucif. xv. || Ep. v., vi., vii., xxxiv., l. 1, Index, ix. ; and in Ezech. lib. i., Hom. xi. ¶ In I. Cor. xiv., l. iii. \*\* In Vigil. Nativ.



*mediam.\** Lastly, S. Theresa in her letters to her director, writes—*I am not less distracted than you are during the Office, and I try to think that it arises from weakness of head. Do not fear to think so too. Does not Our Lord know that when we perform this duty we would wish to do it with the greatest possible attention?*

Whoever will reflect upon these testimonies will feel less surprise at finding himself distracted at prayer. What perhaps should surprise us is that we have sometimes, at prayer, a few moments even of prolonged recollection and profound attention!

III. It is true that our instability of mind increases with the exercise we give it and that a certain number of our distractions bearing traces of our ordinary occupations may seem to be caused by our studies, our engagements, our labours, and the like. But does it therefore follow that we are responsible for them, or that they can be imputed to us as a fault? By no means. To offend God and hinder us from fulfilling our duty, it is not enough that these distractions should be the foreseen result of voluntary occupations; it is requisite that these occupations should be disordered, or that the knowledge of this result should require us to renounce them.

Let us suppose a pastor at the head of a parish, a preacher engaged in a mission, a confessor charged with the direction of a certain number of souls, a writer engaged in the composition of an important work; whatever the virtue of these ecclesiastics may be, whatever care they may take to moderate their activity and keep themselves united to God, they cannot fail to be distracted by their labours; and without an extraordinary grace it will be impossible for them to bring to the Office the recollection of mind, the active and sustained attention of a Carthusian or a Trappist. Is this a reason for advising them to retire to La

\* III. 48, and IV. 1.

Trappe or to the Chartreuse? Who does not see that God's glory and the good of the Church demand rather the contrary; that their exterior functions have their importance no less than the recitation of the Hours; and that it is better that the latter should be less perfectly recited than that the former should be entirely omitted? Distractions of this kind then do not, when we say the Breviary, prevent our performing a good work and offering a real prayer or render the Office ineffectual in the sight of God. *Dicendum quod in spiritu et veritate orat qui ex instinctu Spiritus ad orandum accedit, etiam si ex aliqua infinitate mens postmodum erigetur. . . . Evagatio vero mentis quæ fit præter propositum orationis fructum non tollit.\**

We must never forget this, that when He rewards as well as when He punishes, God regards only the will; and whilst He lays to our charge all the sins which we may have had the intention to commit, even before we actually commit them, so likewise does He count as already offered to Him every homage we desired to tender to Him, even though we ceased to think of this offering before we had completed it.†

IV. I would act upon these principles, some one will say, if I knew that my distractions were involuntary, that is to say were I assured that I took no pleasure in them during the Office, and had not, through my own fault, given rise to them. But upon this point I have no certainty; I am always afraid I give myself too much liberty. These are the fears that trouble me: what ought I to do?

Such is, in fact, the ordinary kind of case to be dealt with, and in dealing with it, here are the rules to be followed.

1. As to the exterior, no account should be made of these fears, and the Office should never, for such reason, be repeated either wholly or partially; for after all there can be no certainty that it really was defective. Why should we agitate

\* D. Thomas, 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>a</sup> q. 83, art. 13, ad 3 et 1. † Gen. xxii. 16.

ourselves as if we had no doubt upon the matter? Suppose, says S. Fr. de Sales, *that at the end of a psalm you are not quite sure you had said it on account of distractions ; well, now, take no heed of it. Because the distraction happened to be prolonged, we must not always conclude that it was the result of negligence. Such a state of things might continue all through the Office without blame on your part.\**

Not only does the Church not require that to be repeated which, it may be feared, was not said as it ought to have been, but prudence itself also forbids such a repetition. An ecclesiastic who acquires the bad habit of repeating his Office will soon find it impossible to say it to his satisfaction ; so that what ought to be a comfort to him, will end by becoming a subject of trouble and disgust.

2. Interiorly we should always humble ourselves for the faults we may have committed : *Ingemisce et dolo quod sis adhuc tam negligens in Horis persolvendis tam raro pleni tibi collectus, tam vagus ad attendendum tam festinus ad finem.† In veritate dedici nihil æque efficace esse ad gratiam promerendam, retinendam, recuperandam, quam si omni tempore coram Deo inveniaris non altum sapere sed timere.‡*

We read in the life of S. Mechtilde that having one day met one of the nuns in deep affliction, on account of the distractions that besieged her during Office, the Saint thought she ought to beg God to deign to console her. Tell her, said Our Lord, *to recite, from the bottom of her heart, at the end of her Hours this invocation—" Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori". If these words merited for the publican the pardon of his sins, cannot they obtain for this person the remission of her faults of distraction and negligence.§*

3. Next we must take courage for the future and keep

\* *Entret.* xviii.    † *Imit.* iv. 7.    ‡ S. Bern. *in Cant.* liv. 9.    § *L.* iii., c. xviii

ourselves in humble confidence, without flattering ourselves that we shall always be able to avoid every surprise, or that we can fix the imagination by constraint. *Noli esse justus multum, neque uplus sapias quam necesse sit, ne obsterpescas.\** It is not necessary to bind down the mind to the Breviary, says Bossuet, nor to give more attention to it than to masses of obligation. We should not hurry, but banish all scruple; set to work fairly, kindly, and simply, as in other prayers.† *Si vel dolemus, jam oramus.‡* As to preparation and dispositions for saying the Office, we must not confound counsel with precept. We should approve everything good, without considering ourselves on that account obliged thereto; we should aspire to perfection, but must not feel disquieted, because we find ourselves still far from it. *Prudentiæ Tuæ pone modum.§*

4. Lastly, the best remedy against scruples will ever be to consult a wise director and follow his advice. *Age secundum consilium prudentium, et depone anxietatem et scrupulum.||* The obligation of the Divine Office is of ecclesiastical origin. We shall always observe it in accordance with the mind of the Church, when, to do so, we perform what Her ministers, whom She declares worthy of confidence, and who are in a position to decide, shall consider sufficient.

### NOTE III.—*Idiotisms of the Psalms.*

In his Dissertation upon the Psalter, Bossuet indicates, with his usual precision and moderation, the sense of a certain number of expressions, of images and particular styles in the psalms. It may not be altogether misplaced if we collect and note here those which are the most uncommon.

#### I. *Terms taken in an indirect sense differing from the ordinary signification.*

Adinventio - - Employed for affections, thoughts, imagina-

\* *Eccli. vii. 17.* † *Letter 148.* ‡ *S. Aug.*  
§ *Prov. xxiii. 7.* || *Imit. iv. 10.*

- tions. *Ibunt in adinventionibus suis*—Ps. lxxx. 10 ; xxvii. 4 ; lxxvi. 13, etc.
- A Facie - - - *Propter faciem*, in presence of—xxvii. 4.
- Anima - - - Often signifies life—lxvii. 21. *Anima mea in manibus meis semper* . . .
- Auditio - - - News. *Ab auditione mala non timebit*—cxi. 7.
- Benedicere - - Celebrate, praise, exalt—cii. 1.
- Bonum - - - For the comparative—cxvii. 9.
- Calix - - - Lot, portion of an inheritance ; from the custom of putting tickets in a cup to be drawn by lot—xv. 5 ; x. 6.
- Christus - - - Anointed, king, Messiah—xvii. 51 ; civ. 15 ; cxxx. 10.
- Coeli Cœlorum The highest heavens—xxv. 7.
- Confiteri - - To praise, bless—cx. 1. *Confessio*, praise—xc. 4.
- Contra - - - Before—iv. 5.
- Converti - - In the sense of *reverti*—lxx. 20.
- Cornu - - - Force, power, pride—lxxiv. 11, 16.
- Corrigere - - To make straight, strengthen, direct.—xcv. 10.
- Dirigere - - - In a passive sense. *Direxi*, I have walked in the right way—lviii. 5 ; cf. Ps. c. 9.
- Excessus - - - Ecstasy, transport—cxv. 11.
- Exercitatio - - Meditation—liv. 3 ; cxviii. 15.
- Ex hoc nunc - - From this moment—cxii. 2.
- Exultare - - - Celebrate with joy—lviii. 17.
- Framea - - - Sword, steel—xxi. 21.
- Funis - - - A cord or measure for portion—xv. 6.
- Funiculus - - Track, footpath.
- Furor - - - Rage—vi. 2, etc.
- Humilis - - - Signifies sometimes vile, base, despised. *Humilia respicit*—cxxvii. 6. So *humili-*

*tas* is often lowness, abjection, littleness  
—ix. 14 ; vii. 8, etc.

- Infernus - - - Grave, tomb—xlvi. 14, etc.  
 Ingredi - - - For *gradiri*—xiv. 2.  
 In idipsum - - Together, in concert—xxxiii. 4 ; cxxi. 3.  
 In finem - - Always, even to the end—ix. 19.  
 Inspiratio - - Breath—xvii. 16.  
 Laudari - - - To glorify oneself—x. 3.  
 Locus - - - Tomb—cxlii. 7.  
 Malignari - - To act wickedly, with malice. *Nolite malignari*—civ. 15 ; xxvi. 8.  
 Maturitas - - Dawn—cxviii. 147.  
 Meditari - - To say—xxxiv. 28. To be consumed—  
 lxxxix. 9.  
 Mirificare - - To glorify—iv. 4 ; xv. 3.  
 Mortificare - - To put to death—xxvi. 32.  
 Necessitas - - Anguish, affliction—xxiv. 17.  
 Nimis - - - Greatly, in the highest degree—cxviii. 96.  
 Nisi quia - - If it be only that—xciii. 17 ; cxviii. 92.  
 Non omnis - - None—xxxiii. 11 ; xlviii. 18.  
 Ossa - - - The interior, strength, vigour—xxxiv. 10 ;  
 lii. 6.  
 Participatio - - Assemblage, union of parties—cxxxii. 3.  
 Pauperes - - The afflicted, tried, humble, worthy of com-  
 passion—ix. 10.  
 Pinguis - - - Rich, strong—xxxi. 30.  
 Potentiæ - - For *Opera potentiæ*—cv. 2.  
 Potentatus - - Force—xix. 7 ; lxxxix. 10.  
 Pro peccato - - Expiatory sacrifice—xxxix. 17.  
 Redimere - - Deliver. *Redemisti virgam hæreditatis Tue*  
 —lxxiii. 2. Thou hast repurchased the  
 people as Thy heritage and Thy kingdom.  
 Resurgere - - To stand up—i. 5.  
 Reverentia - - Confusion, ignominy—xxxiv. 26.



Salutare Dei	-	The salvation, or the Saviour Who comes from God— <i>Exultabo in salutari Tuo</i> —ix. 15.
Sanctificatio	-	Holiness—cxxxi. 18. Sanctuary—cxiii. 2.
Sanctificium	-	Sanctuary—lxvii. 19.
Scandalum	-	Stumbling-block, <i>offendiculum</i> —xliv. 21.
Si - - - -	-	Ellipse for not—lxxxiii. 3; cxxxi. 31.
Spiritus	- - -	Breath, wind—cii. 16.
Supplantatio	-	Artifice—xl. 20.
Tabernaculum	-	Dwelling—lxxxiii. 11.
Usquequaque	-	For ever, absolutely—cxviii. 8.
Vas - - - -	-	Instrument, any object; <i>In eo paravit vasa mortis</i> —vii. 14. <i>Confitebor Tibi in vasis psalmi</i> —lxx. 22.
Velle - - -	-	To take complacency—xxi. 9, etc.
Verbum - - -	-	Not word only, but everything capable of being expressed by a word—lxiv. 4; cx. 3.
Virgam - - -	-	Chastisement—cix. 2. Sceptre—ii. 9.
Virtus - - -	-	Force—cxlvi. 5—very often, an armed troop—xliii. 10; lxvii. 12.
Voluntas	- - -	Desire—xxx. 3.
Zelare - - -	-	To bear envy—lxxii. 2.

## II. *Expressions peculiar to the Vulgate and borrowed from the Hebrew.*

The Latin translator having closely copied his version from the Greek translation of the Septuagint has, like them, used many Hebraisms in his work. This is apparent at the first glance.

1. A great many substantives are employed as modifying other words, whether in the nominative or in the genitive or in other cases, with a preposition, thus :—

*Omnia mandata tua veritas* for *vera sunt*; *Umbra mortis* for *mortalis*; *Dominus gloria* for *gloriosus*; *Vir dolorum* for *doloribus affectus*; *Mons Dei, cedrus Dei* for *divinus, divina*—

eminent, excellent, divine; *Conventicula de sanguinibus* for *sanguinea*; *Propositiones ab initio* for *antiquæ*; *Mortuus sæculi*—dead for ages.

2. The feminine gender is often put for the neuter in pronouns: *Hæc me consolata est* for *Hoc me consolatum est*; *Pro hac* for *propter hoc*.

3. In Hebrew, the two forms of the verb expressing indifferently the past, present, and future, the Greek and Latin translators have often employed these three terms or tenses one for the other: *Dispersit, dedit pauperibus* for *dispergit, dat*; *Os justi meditabitur sapientiam* for *meditatur*; *Credidi propter quod locutus sum* for *Credo ideo loquor*.

4. Words are often found repeated. This repetition is ordinarily intended to give more force to the idea: *Expectans expectavi*; *Deus Deus meus*; *Spiritus procellarum*; *Lutum fæcis*. Sometimes, however, they express multitude, *Generatio et Generatio*, *Homo et homo*, and at other times variety: *In corde et corde*, i.e., *in corde duplici*. However, we easily get accustomed to these idioms; and use teaches us to discern their true meaning.

#### NOTE IV.—*Eighth Lesson of Martyrs.*

Among the lessons from the fathers, which present some difficulty in the reading, there is none more obscure than the eighth of the Common of Martyrs, *secundo loco*. It is taken from the Commentary of S. Ambrose upon the Gospel of S. Luke, ch. vi. As it occurs pretty frequently we think it right to dwell upon it a little.

*Quatuor tantum beatitudines sanctus Lucas dominicas posuit, says the holy doctor, octo vero S. Matthæus; sed in illis octo istae quatuor sunt et in quatuor istis illæ octo. Hic enim quatuor velut virtutes amplexus est cardinales; ille in illis octo mysticum numerum reseravit. Pro octava enim multi inscribuntur Psalmi, et mandatum accipis octo illis partem dare fortasse benedic*

tionibus. *Sicut enim spei nostræ octava perfectio est, ita octava summa virtutum est.*

For the meaning of this passage, a similar passage of the same doctor may be consulted, the eighth lesson of the Feast of S. Louis, 25th August, and two extracts from S. Augustine, in the ninth lesson of the 5th and 7th days of the Octave of All Saints.

The chief difficulty comes from the last sentence but one, which contains two difficulties—*Pro octava enim* and *Mandatum accipis*. In the second it is certain that the holy doctor alludes to the verse of Ecclesiastes: *Da partem septem nec non et octo*, xi. 2. This verse itself has not a very clear meaning; but as the word *septem* is often employed by the Hebrews to signify plenitude, we may affirm that *septem et octo* signify superaddition, superabundance, excess; and then the verse should be translated thus: *Give alms, that is, a part of your goods to all the poor, without exception.\* Nec non et octo; rather more than less, as the psalmist has said: In æternum et ultra; and Our Lord: Non usque septies sed usque septuagies septies.* S. Gregory of Nazianzum assures us that his father thus understood and practised this maxim: *Partem dans non solum septem verum si octavus accederet, libentius sua profundens quam alii acquirant. In encom pat.†*

As regards the first difficulty, *pro octava*, it should be known that according to the fathers, especially S. Ambrose, the 8th day *octava* is the symbol of Christian regeneration and of the life of the blessed. The reason for this, is that our Saviour chose this day for His Resurrection, and the Church has consecrated it to a holy repose—an image of that upon which God entered after the Creation, and into which He desires that all the members of His risen Son shall enter: *Relinquitur sabbatismus populo Dei.‡* Such is the order of

\* Luke vi. 30. † Cf. Job x. 19. ‡ Heb. iv. 9.

ideas to which the number *eight* naturally raises the mind : *Omne præsentis vitæ tempus septem diebus evolvitur, et ideo æterna dies quæ, expleta horum dierum vicissitudine, futura est octava vocatur.\** From this it seems came the idea of S. Ambrose, that there is a certain octave for perfection as there is for beatitude ; that it is by the octave of virtues that we should rise to the term of rewards, and that it might have entered into the designs of the Holy Ghost, in this text of Ecclesiastes, to indicate to us the relation of the one to the other. The reserve expressed by this word *fortasse* gives us to understand that it is a conjecture of his rather than an assertion properly so-called.

S. Gregory the Great expresses more clearly the same thought when he says : *Partem simul septem et octo damus, quando sic ea quæ septem diebus evolvuntur disponimus ut per hæc ad bona æterna veniamus.†*

Here we give an attempt at translation, wherein we have been sought to make the idea of S. Ambrose intelligible without departing too much from his expressions.

“S. Luke mentions only four beatitudes whilst S. Matthew enumerates eight. But the eight of S. Matthew comprise the four of S. Luke, and these last four are equal to the eight others. The first of these evangelists has reduced all to the four cardinal virtues ; the other in raising them to eight has given us the key to this mysterious number. In fact, many psalms bear this title, *Pro octava* ; and the Holy Ghost recommends us, in a certain passage, *eight things* in which we must have a share. Now, was it not these beatitudes that He had in view ? The octave, the number eight, expressing the accomplishment of our hopes, naturally likewise expresses the plenitude of holiness or the sum of virtues.”

NOTE V.—*Agreement of the Office with its object.*

It often happens when an Office is common to find in it

\* S. Greg. *de Sept. Psalm pæn. In præm.* † *In Ezech. i. 2 ; Hom. iv. 2.*

features which seem at first sight not to accord with the subject. Thus, for example, on the feasts of some saints who have suffered for the faith, but who have not died under punishment—S. Eusebius, S. Marcel, S. Felix, S. John, S. Melchiades, S. Martin, S. Pontian, S. Sylverius—the ordinary Office of a martyr is recited, with the exception of a single responsory : *Hic est vere martyr*, etc. Consequently at Vespers is said, *Pænas cucurrit fortiter . . . . Fundensque pro Te sanguinem* ; at Lauds, *Soluta sunt vincula* ; for others who have suffered together is said at the Common of many martyrs, *Hi pro Te furias . . . . Cæduntur gladiis . . . . Viri sancti gloriosum sanguinem fuderunt pro Domino . . . . Tradiderunt corpora sua*. These words, which may surprise us at first, have not on that account a less just and true meaning. To justify them it suffices to observe—1st. That the greater portion are said in a general manner in praise of all the martyrs, v. 9 : *Hi pro Te furias*, etc., and that when the praise is made of many together, nothing prevents us from considering them in a body and saying of them that they did such and such acts even when all had not taken part in each of them. Thus S. Paul says of the just of the Old Law : *Obturerunt ora leonum*, etc.\* 2nd. That as regards the words that properly refer to the saints whose feast is celebrated, a sufficient foundation for them will be found in the sufferings they have undergone and in the perils to which they were exposed. Without dying in torments they may have shed their blood, despised death, and offered the sacrifice of their life for the cause of Jesus Christ. *Qui se tormentis et morti sub oculis Dei obtulit, passus est quidquid pati voluit*, says S. Cyprian.† In certain passages, however, the desire to harmonise the words of the Office with their object has caused the

\* *Hebr. xi. 2.*

† *Epist. lxxvii.* See Guyet, *Heortologia*, l. ii., c. vii., q. 8 ; and l. iii., c. x., q. 2 ; and c. xi., q. 1.

modification even of the S. Scripture, v. 9, Virgin Martyrs, Lessons of Matins, 2<sup>o</sup> loco, Little Chapter of None ; *deprecata sum*, etc.

NOTE VI.—*Authors and date of Hymns.*

Gavantus counted only ninety-six hymns. This number already increased in the time of Merati, has at the present day risen to more than five hundred, if we include those of the Proper of Rome. We will first give a list of the known hymnographers, with the hymns attributed to each of them ; then, by centuries, the list of hymns the authors of which are unknown.

§ I.

1.—S. HILARY, bishop of Poitiers ; d. 367.

Beata nobis gaudia (in part) : *Pentecost, Lauds—Cf. Ambr.*

2.—S. AMBROSE, bishop of Milan ; d. 397.

Ad regias Agni dapes : *Sunday in Albis.*

Æterna cœli gloria : *Feria vi., Lauds.*

Æterne rerum Conditor : *Sunday, Lauds.*

Æterne Rex altissime : *Ascension, Matins.*

Aurora cœlum purpurat : *Sunday after Easter.*

Aurora jam spargit polum : *Saturday, Lauds.*

Beata nobis gaudia (in part) : *Pentecost, Lauds.*

Cœli Deus sanctissime : *Feria iv., Vespers.*

Consors paterni luminis : *Feria iii., Matins.*

Creator alme siderum : *Advent.*

Deus, Tuorum militum : *Common of one martyr.*

En clara vox redarguit : *Advent.*

Hominis superne Conditor : *Feria ii., Vespers.*

Immensi cœli Conditor : *Feria vi., Vespers.*

Jam Christus astra ascenderat : *Pentecost.*

Jam lucis orto sidere : *Prime.*



Jam sol recedit : *Trinity and Saturday Vespers.*  
 Jesu corona celsior : *Confessor not a bishop.*  
 Jesu corona Virginum : *Virgin, comm.*  
 Jesu redemptor omnium : *Christmas.*  
 Magnæ Deus potentiæ : *Feria v., Vespers.*  
 Memento rerum : *Little Office, De Jesu redemptor.*  
 Nox atra rerum : *Feria v., Matins.*  
 Nunc, Sancte nobis Spiritus : *Tierce.*  
 Paschale mundo : Part of *Aurora.*  
 Rector potens : *Sexte.*  
 Rerum Creator optime : *Feria iii., Matins.*  
 Rerum Deus, tenax vigor : *None.*  
 Rex sempiternæ cœlitum : *Sunday Matins.*  
 Salutis humanæ Sator : *Ascension.*  
 Splendor Paternæ gloriæ : *Feria ii., Lauds.*  
 Somno reffectis artubus : *Feria ii., Matins.*  
 Summæ Parens : *Trinity and Saturday, Matins.*  
 Telluris alme Conditor : *Feria iii., Vespers.*  
 Te lucis ante terminum : *Compline.*  
 Tristes erant : *Apostles Common—De Aurora.*  
 Tu Trinitatis unitas : *Feria vi., Matins.*  
 Verbum supernum : *Advent, Matins.*

*Note.*—All these hymns are attributed to S. Ambrose ; but a great many of them are by contemporary or later authors, who imitated the style of this holy bishop—(Edit. Benedict : *Admonitio in hymnos S. Ambr., t. II, sub fin*). Many of them have undergone change either at the time of their insertion in the Breviary or since. This also applies to the following ones.

### 3.—PRUDENT CLEM. ; d. 413.

Ales diei nuntius : *Feria iii., Lauds.*  
 Audit tyrannus : *Holy Innocents, Matins.*  
 Lux ecce surgit aurea : *Feria v., Lauds.*  
 Nox et tenebræ : *Feria iv., Lauds.*  
 O sola magnarum urbium : *Epiphany.*  
 Quicumque Christium quæritis : *Transfiguration.*

Salvete, flores martyrum : *Holy Innocents, Lauds.*

4.—SEDULIUS, priest ; d. 430.

A solis ortus cardine : *Christmas, Lauds.*

Crudelis Herodes : *Epiphany, 1st Vespers.*

5.—ELPIS A BOETIA ; d. 524.

Beate pastor, Petre : *S. Pet. ad vinc.*

Decora lux : *SS. Peter and Paul.*

Egregie doctor Paule : *S. Paul.*

6.—FORTUNATUS, bishop of Poitiers ; d. 600.

Ave, maris stella (?) : *Office of B. Virgin.*

Crux fidelis : *Passion Sunday*, taken from *Pange*.

O gloriosa Virginum : *Little Office*, taken from the following.

Quem terra, pontus : „ „ *Matins.*

Lustra sex qui jam : *Passion.*

Pange lingua . . . Lauream : *Passion and Palm Sunday.*

Vexilla regis : *Passion and Holy Cross.*

7.—S. GREGORY THE GREAT ; d. 604.

Æterne Rex altissime : *Assumption—Cf. S. Ambr.*

Audi, benigne Conditor : *Lent, Vespers.*

Ecce jam noctis : *Sunday, Lauds.*

Ex more docti : „ „ *Matins.*

Lucis Creator optime : *Sunday, Vespers.*

Maria, castis osculis (?) : *S. Magdalen.*

Nocte surgentes : *Sunday, Matins.*

Primo die quo Trinitas : *Sunday, Matins.*

Veni, Creator Spiritus : *Pentecost—Rabanus (?)*, Charlemagne (?).

8.—PAUL, deacon of Aquilea, or rather P. WINFRIDE ; d. 774.

Antra deserti : Fragment of *Ut queant.*

O nimis felix : *Item.*

Ut queant laxis : *S. John Baptist, Lauds.*

9.—S. PAULINUS, patriarch of Aquilea ; d. 804.  
 Miris modis repente : *S. Peter's chains.*  
 Quodcumque in orbe : *Item.*

10.—RABANUS MAURUS, bishop of Mayence ; d. 856.  
 Christe, sanctorum : *SS. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.*  
 Te splendor et Virtus : *S. Michael.*  
 Tibi, Christe, splendor : *S. Raphael.*

11.—ODO, abbot of Cluny ; d. 942.  
 Maria, castis osculis (?) : *Cf. S. Greg.*  
 Pater superni luminis (?) : *Cf. Bellarm.*  
 Summi parentis unice : *S. Magdalen, Lauds.*

12.—S. BERNARD, abbot of Clairvaux ; d. 1153.  
 Jesu, Decus angelicum : Fragment of the following.  
 Jesu, dulcis memoria : *Holy name of Jesus.*  
 Jesu, Rex admirabilis : Continuation of the preceding.

13.—S. THOMAS OF AQUIN ; d. 1274.  
 Adoro Te devote : *Thanksgiving after Mass.*  
 Pange lingua . . . Corporis, *B. Sacrament—Vespers.*  
 Sacris solemnibus : *Item, Matins.*  
 Verbum supernum : *Item, Lauds.*

14.—JACAPONE DE TODI, Franciscan ; d. 1306.  
 Stabat Mater : *Seven Dolours.*  
 Sancta Mater istud agas : Continuation of the above.  
 Virgo Virginum : Another fragment.

15.—Card. SILVIO ANTONIANI ; d. 1603.  
 Fortem virili : *Holy women, Comm.*

16.—Card. BELLARMINE, archbishop of Capua ; d. 1621.  
 Æterne Rector siderum : *Angel Guardians.*  
 Custodes hominum : *Item.*  
 Pater superni luminis (?) : *Cf. Odo, of Cluny.*

## 17.—URBAN VIII. ; d. 1644.

Domare cordis impetus : *S. Elisabeth.*

Hæc est dies : *S. Theresa.*

Martinæ celebri : *30 Jan.—S. Martina.*

Nullis te genitor : Part of *Regali soleo.*

Lux alma, Jesu : *Transfiguration—Cf. S. Bern. Jesu dulcis.*

Opes decusque : Continuation of *Domare cordis.*

Regali solio : *S. Hermenegilde.*

Regis superni : Continuation of *Hæc est dies.*

Tu natale solum : Continuation of *Martinæ.*

## 18.—Fr. LAURENTINI, Hagiographer, Florence ; d. 1719.

Cœlestis Agni nuptias : *S. Juliana Falconieri.*

## § II.

## UNKNOWN AUTHORS.

*Fifth Century.*

Æterna Christi munera : *Apostles, Comm.*

Christo profusum : *Martyr, Comm.*—Continuation of preceding.

*Sixth to Ninth Century.*

Sanctorum meritis : *Martyrs, Comm.*

*Ninth to Fifteenth Century.*

Alto ex olympi : Taken from the following.

Cœlestis urbs Jerusalem : *Dedication.*

Exultet orbis : *Apostles, Comm.*

Hujus oratu : Taken from *Virginis proles.*

Invicte Martyr : *Comm. of one martyr Lauds.*

Iste Confessor : *Confessor, Comm.*

Jesu redemptor omnium : *Pontiff, Comm.*

O sol salutis : *Lent, Lauds.*

Placare, Christe, servilis : *All Saints—Rabanus Maurus?*

Rex gloriose martyrum : *Martyr, Comm.*—S. Gregory ?  
 Salutis æternæ dator : *All Saints, Lauds*—Rabanus Maurus ?  
 Virginis proles : *Virgins, Comm.*

*Seventeenth or Eighteenth Century.*

Aspice, infami Deus : *Passion, Fer. vi. of Sexagesima.*  
 Athleta Christi : *S. Venantius, de Martyr Dei.*  
 Aspice ut Verbum : *Agony of Our Lord.*  
 Auctor beate : *Sacred Heart.*  
 Cœlitum, Joseph, decus : *S. Joseph.*  
 Dum nocte pulsa Lucifer : *S. Venantius.*  
 En ut superba : *Sacred Heart.*  
 Exite, Sion filiæ : *Crown of Thorns.*  
 Festivis resonent : *Precious Blood.*  
 Gloriam sacræ : *Holy Winding Sheet.*  
 Ira justa conditoris : *Precious Blood.*  
 Iste quem læti : *S. Joseph.*  
 Jam toto subitus : *Third Sunday in September.*  
 Jesu, dulcis amor meus : *de Gloriam Sacræ.*  
 Legis figuris : *Crown of Thorns.*  
 Martyr Dei Venantius : *S. Venantius.*  
 Mœrentes oculi : *Passion, Fer. vi. post Sexagesima.*  
 Mysterium mirabile : *Holy Winding Sheet.*  
 O quot undis ! *Third Sunday, September.*  
 O Stella Jacob ! *Purity of Mary, Third Sunday in October.*  
 Præclara custos : *Item, et Immac. Concept.*  
 Quænam lingua ? *Holy Lance.*  
 Quicumque certum : *Sacred Heart.*  
 Sævo dolorum turbine : *Passion, Fer. vi. post Sexages.*  
 Salvete, Christi vulnera : *Precious Blood.*  
 Salvete, clavi et lancea : *Holy Lance.*  
 Summæ Deus clementiæ : *Third Sunday in September.*  
 Summi parentis Filio : *Sacred Heart.*  
 Te, Joseph celebrant : *S. Joseph.*

Te mater alma numinis : *Second Sunday in October.*

Tinctam ergo Christi : *Holy Lance.*

Venit e cœlo : *Agony of Our Lord.*

*Eighteenth Century.*

Corpus domas jejuniis : *S. John Cantius, Matins.*

Gentis Polonæ : *Item, Lauds.*

Te deprecante, corporum : *Item, Vespers.*

*Nineteenth Century.*

Sæpe dum Christi : 24 May, *Auxilium Christianorum.*

Te Redemptoris : *Item.*



## OBSERVATIONS.

1. The greater part of these hymns differ but little from the rules of Latin versification as regards the measure. They are composed of lyric verses of the most popular form ; iambics of six feet (*Decora lux æternitatis auream*), iambics of four feet (*Jesu, corona virginum*), trochaics (*Pange, lingua, gloriosi Lauream certaminis*), etc.

2. Nevertheless in some few of them the versification is altogether syllabic, that is, it consists like that of the greater part of the proses—(*Veni Sancte Spiritus, Dies iræ, Stabat mater, Lauda Sion*)—solely in the number of syllables, with the tonic accent, assonance or rhyme ; for example—

Pange, lingua, gloriosi  
Corporis mysterium.  
Sacris solemniis.  
Verbum supernum prodiens.  
Ave, Maris Stella.

3.—We find also in the Breviary some of the antiphons written in hexameters.

Alma Redemptoris Mater, quæ pervia cœli.—Anthems of the B. Virgin. Or in distichs.

O magnum pietatis opus, etc.—Vespers of Holy Cross.

Solve, jubente Deo, terrarum, Petre, catenas.—*Magnificat* of Second Vespers of S. Peter's Chains.

Hic vir, despiciens mundum, etc.—Second Vespers of Conf. Pont.

### NOTE VII.—*Difficulties in the Hymns.*

As to the difficulties of interpretation which these hymns

may present we explained in the second part (Ch. VI. and following) those referring to the Daily Office, and as for the others, we must refer to the commentators. Still we think it will be well to briefly clear up here some of the obscure verses which are often repeated.

1.—We read in the Common of Apostles, at Matins—

Æterna Christi munera  
Apostolorum gloriam  
Psalmos et hymnos debitos  
Lætis canamus vocibus.

*Canamus lætis vocibus gloriam apostolorum, munera æterna Christi, psalmos et hymnos debitos.* Subaudi : *Canendo.* Olim : *Laudes canentes debitas.*—"Let us sing the triumph of the glorious apostles; let us worthily celebrate the honour which Jesus Christ has gained for them for all eternity."

Further on—

In his Paterna gloria  
In his triumphat Filius  
In his voluntas Spiritus  
Cœlum repletur gaudio.

In these apostles the Three Divine Persons have triumphed : *Triumphat gloria Paterna, Filius, Spiritus, qui est voluntas, etc.* *Triumphat*, in the singular, to express the substantial unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

At Lauds—

Præcepta quorum protinus  
Languor salusque sentiunt  
Sanate mentas languidas  
Augete nos virtutibus.

Id est : *Vos quorum præcepta languor et salus sentiunt, etc.* : "Oh, ye who are masters both of sickness and health,\* exert your power for the healing of our souls."

\* *Luke xi., Mark xvi.*

## 2.—On Sunday, at Lauds—

Nocturna lux vianibus  
 A nocte noctem segregans  
 Præco diei jam sonat  
 Jubarque solis evocat.

An allusion to the Hour of Lauds of which the cock-crow was long a signal. In early times when clocks were unknown, the first cock-crow indicated midnight; and God was praised for the wonderful instinct which He had given to this domestic bird to distinguish the hours—*Quis dedit gallo intelligentiam?* \*

*Præco diei, etc.* : Already the herald of the day proclaims the sun's return. *Nocturna lux.* . . . His clear song is a signal for travellers, like a light in darkness. *A nocte noctem* : Crowing regularly at midnight and towards dawn the cock divides the night into different parts. S. Ambrose must have thought of this during those nights he passed with his people in the besieged basilica when he improvised and made the faithful sing their first hymns.

Hoc excitatus lucifer  
 Solvit polum caligine  
 Hac omnis erronum cohors  
 Viam nocendi diserit.

*Lucifer* : The morning star excited awakened by this chant. *Cohors erronum* : The crowd of evil doers and vagabonds. Night is the season of crime, so also of prayer : *Qui male agit odit lucem.* † *Alias erronum cohors.*

## At Vespers—

Lucis Creator optime  
 Lucem dierum proferens  
 Primordiis lucis novæ  
 Mundi parans originem.

Allusion to the creation of light and to the appearance of the first day. "Thou Who created the light and by separating

\* *Job xviii. 36.*† *John iii. 20.*

it from darkness, hast made it day. Thou Who, by this creation new, didst lay the world's foundations !" . . .

At the following strophe :—

Illabitur tetrum chaos ;  
Audi preces cum fletibus.

Allusion to the Vesper Hour and return of night. "The darkness that brooded o'er the world at chaos before the dawn of the first day, spreads itself over us anew."

On the same day in Lent, at Matins—

Ex more docti mystico. . . .

Allusion to the fast of forty days by our Saviour, Moses, and Elias. "According to the mysterious examples, figurative and prophetic, which have been given to us." . . .

3.—On Saturday, at Lauds—

Ut mane quod nos ultimum  
Hic deprecamur cernui  
Cum luce nobis effluat  
Hoc dum canore concrepat.

*Id est* : Ut ultimum illud consummatum sæculi tempus, quod expectamus cum humilitate, nobis cedat in participationem perpetuæ lucis, dum hoc mane quo vivimus personat modulatione divinæ legis et in laudem Dei expenditur. *Mane ultimum* : The day of judgment which will have no evening, but will be the beginning of eternity. *Dum hoc, subaudi mane* : This one. *Canor* : Song, harmony.

4.—Pentecost Day, at Matins—

Solemnis urgebat dies  
Quo mystico Septemplici  
Orbis volutus septies  
Signat beata tempora.

Sense : "The day had come when, after the seven figurative weeks which separate the Exodus from the promulgation of the law, the most happy event for the Church was to be realised"—*instabat dies sollemnis qui signat beata tempora legislationis*

*olim factæ quinquagesimo die post egressum patrum de Ægypto. Urgebat, instabat—Orbis volutus septies*: the week. *Septemplici*: *Quo die septemplici* repeated seven times—"seven weeks had revolved, forty-nine days had passed". *Mystico*: Figurative. The promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai was a figure of that of the New Law. *Signat*; *significat*—Cf. S. Aug. de Verb. Dom. *In Off. diei vii., inf. Oct. omnium Sanct.*—Lect. ix.

At Lauds—

Patrata sunt hæc mystice  
Paschæ peracto tempore  
Sacro dierum circulo  
Quo lege fit remissio.

Facts and figures correspond. The mystery is accomplished at the end of Paschal time. The souls are delivered, freed by the Holy Ghost, after the fifty days which were figured by the fifty years, which formerly brought freedom from slavery and debt to the children of Israel.

5.—On the feast of S. John Baptist, at Lauds—

Serta ter denis alios coronant  
Aucta clementis; duplicata quosdam:  
Trina te fructu cumulata centum  
Nexibus ornant.

There is a triple allusion in these lines. 1. To the preceding strophe in which the Precursor is said to be at once virgin, doctor, and martyr. 2. To the three special glories or crowns which these titles give Him in heaven. 3. To the parable of the seed which teaches that the word of God produces thirty, sixty, and even a hundredfold in hearts that are well-prepared.\* The idea is that this saint having joined the most eminent merits to the most sublime qualities, now has nothing wanting to his happiness.

"The crown of some shines with thirty jewels; that of

\* *Matt. xiii. 23.*

others with sixty ; thine, uniting them, and even adding to them, possesses a hundred." *Serta aucta crementis ter denis coronant alios ; quosdam coronant sarta duplicata, seu duplex corona cum fructu sexagesimo ; sed sarta trina fructu cumulato ornant te centum nexibus.*

Here we end our explanations. If other difficulties are met with they will easily be settled either by reflection or by comparison of the text with the original readings, which has been obscured in many places in the attempt to produce prosodical harmony.

NOTE VIII.—*Antiphons, Responsories, Little Chapters.*

In the *Elucidatorium* of Clichtovius we can see the explanation of the great O's of Advent, of the Antiphons of the Nativity and of the Blessed Virgin, and of many responsories. We will here only give a few notes upon certain texts of frequent occurrence.

*Dum esset Rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suavitatis.\** The perfume which pleases the Lord, that which drew the Divine Word to dwell within the Blessed Virgin and which induces Him to unite Himself to pure souls, is the perfume of virtues, the incense of prayer.†

*Nigra sum, sed formosa filiæ Jerusalem : ideo dilexit me Rex et introduxit me in Cubiculum suum.‡* By nature we are disfigured and uncomely. The Blessed Virgin Herself owes Her celestial beauty to the grace of Her Son. It is just that She should humble Herself in proportion to the wonders which God has worked in Her.

*Iam hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit : surge, amica mea et veni.§* Words of our Saviour calling to Him His mother and His faithful servants. The present life is like the winter—the

\* *Cant. i. 2.* † *Apoc. viii. 4.* ‡ *Cant. i., verses 4, 3.*

§ *Cant. ii., v. 11-13.*



time of labour and privations ; the life to come will be the season of harvest and rejoicing.

*Sicut lætantium omnium nostrum habitatio est in te :* Application to the Blessed Virgin of what is said of the city of God in Psalm lxxxvi.—“Thou art the glorious city, the inhabitants whereof are filled with delights.”

*Gaude, Maria Virgo ; cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in universo mundo :* Words attributed to S. Epiphanius and admirably commented on by Sylvius, t. v., pt. iii. of his works. “Hæresies could prevail naught against Thee ; Thou hast overcome them by obtaining for the Church the grace to triumph over them.”

*In odorem unguentorum tuorum currimus ; adolescentulæ dilexerunt te nimis :*\* Words addressed by the Church to the B. Virgin on the Assumption. “We run in Thy footsteps, in the sweet odour of Thy virtues ; all innocent souls whose queen Thou art love Thee with an incomparable love.” We may also consider these words as addressed to Our Lord by the Blessed Virgin and all the blessed souls.

*Ante thorum hujus Virginis frequentate nobis dulcia cantica dramatis :* Often sing the praises of this pure Virgin before the nuptial bed She chose, in which She conceived a God. *Cantica dramatis :* Songs commemorative of some grand act. *Frequentate :* *Frequenta canticum*, says Isaias xxiii. 16.

*Revertere, revertere, Sunamitis ; revertere, revertere ut intueamur te.*† The word *Sulamitis*, *pacifica* read in the Canticles, is here replaced by *Sunamitis* : allusion to the virgin of Sunam, whom David placed in the rank of his wives. This antiphon of the Common of Virgins represents the holy soul quitting the world to go to her spouse, and the Church, struck with her virtues, expresses Her admiration at the moment when forced to yield her to God.

\* *Cant. i., v. 3, 2.*

† *Cant. vi. 12.*

*Hæc est qui nescivit thorum in delicto ; habebit fructum in respectione animarum sanctarum.\* Felix est sterilis et incoinquinata quæ nescivit, etc.—Habebit fructum : Her good works will honour her as a numerous possession—In respectione : quando Deus respiciet, quando retribuet : Erit enim respectus illorum.†*

*Omnes Sancti quanta passi sunt tormenta ut securi pervenirent ad palmam martyrii!* Allusion to the passage in the Apocalypse vii. 13, brought to mind in the Office : *Hi qui amicti sunt stolis albis, et palmæ in manibus eorum, qui sunt ? Hi sunt qui venerunt de tribulatione magnâ. . . . Omnes Sancti :* These words may be restricted to the saints with whose praise we are engaged, whose Office is being celebrated ; but they may likewise be extended to all the saints without any exception, either because all have the same palm, the same recompense, as the martyrs, and because none have obtained it but at the price of sufferings and sacrifices ; or, because those who have not indeed shed their blood for Jesus Christ yet have been in the disposition to shed it ; or, lastly, because the term martyr only properly signifies, according to its etymology and primitive acceptation, one who gave testimony or witness to the truth of christianity. *Eritis mihi testes græce martyres.‡ Stephanus testis tuus : martyr tuus.§ Joannes, particeps in tribulatione propter testimonium, seu martyrium Jesu. ||*

*Lapides torrentis illi dulces fuerunt : ipsum sequuntur omnes animæ justæ.* Second Antiphon of S. Stephen. Allusion to the death this holy deacon suffered on the banks of Cedron, and to the influence which the example of his martyrdom has had upon the Church. It is said of David,¶ that he picked up five stones in the torrent and that the first which he hurled against Goliath struck down the Philistine and began

\* Sap. iii. 13.      † Sap. iii. 16.      ‡ Act i. 8.      § Act xxii. 20.  
|| Apoc. i. 9.—Vid. Guyet : *Heortologia* iii., xi. 2.      ¶ I. Kings xvi. 40.

the rout of the uncircumcised : *Elegit sibi quinque lapides de torrente . . . et circumducens percussit Philistæum in fronte.* The Church seems to say here that though S. Stephen was stoned like Goliath he was not thrown down and confounded like him ; that the death of this first martyr only served to increase the courage of all true christians, *omnes animæ justæ*, because it taught them to see in the blows which are given to them so many precious stones destined to adorn their brows for all eternity—*Dulces fuerunt.* They will appear pleasant to them : *Ille gaudens suscipit lapides*, 6th Respons. Perhaps, too, we ought to see in it an allusion to ch. xxi. 15 of Numbers, “The stones of the torrents were bowed down that the people of God might rest” : *Scopuli torrentium inclinati sunt ut requiescerent.*

*Hic vir, despiciens mundum et terrena*, etc. This Antiphon, the last of Confessors, not Bishops, offers no other peculiarity than that it forms a regular distich. As to the meaning it perfectly agrees with the little chapter : *Beatus vir qui post aurum non abiit.* . . . It answers the question of Ecclesiasticus : *Quis est hic ?* It teaches that a soul detached from the things of the world becomes rich by what others are impoverished : *ore et manu.*

*Cantantibus organis Cæcilia Domino decantabat dicens.* . . . 22nd Nov. Understand—“Whilst the instruments of music resounded in her ears Cecilia sang before the Lord”—and not —“She sang *accompanying herself upon the organ*”. See 1st Response : *Virgo in corde suo soli Deo decantabat* :—VII<sup>th</sup> *Quasi apis argumentosa* : Like the busy bee.

#### RESPONSORIES.

VI<sup>th</sup> of the Common of Virgins : *Afferentur Regi virgines post eam : proximæ ejus afferentur tibi*, etc.\* Virgins shall be

\* P. xliv. 16.

brought to Jesus Christ, the true King of Glory, figured by Solomon in the suite of Her whom He has taken for His spouse, that is, the Church and of Her especially whom She recognises as Her Queen. All shall successively enter Heaven and take rank there according to their merits—*Specie Tua et pulchritudine tua intende*.\* Words addressed in the first instance to Our Lord, but which also suit the elect in proportion as they share in His glory and in His virtues. VIII<sup>th</sup> of Apostles and Martyrs in Paschal time. *Candidi facti sunt Nazaræi ejus, alleluia: splendorem Deo dederunt, alleluia. Et sicut lac coagulati sunt, alleluia.* Taken from the Lamentations of Jeremias iv. 7. *Nazaræus*—consecrated, immolated, sacrificed. The Church bestows this title upon Her martyrs—“Then blood has washed away from them every spot: *Candidi facti sunt.* They have glorified God by showing forth the force of His grace: *Splendorem Deo dederunt*; and by their firmness in their trial they have given a new lustre to their virtue: *Sicut lac coagulati sunt*—*Candidiores nive, nitidiores lacte, rubicundiores ebore antiquo, sapphiro pulchriores.* They are purer than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy than old ivory and more beautiful than the sapphire.”—The ancients were accustomed to subject their ivory to a certain dye when it had lost its original whiteness.—S. Cyprian alludes to the same passage when he said of the Church: *erat ante in laboribus fratrum candidi: nunc facta est in Martyrum cruore purpurea*.† And S. Jerome gives an analogous meaning to the 10<sup>th</sup> verse of the V<sup>th</sup> of Canticles: *Patruelis meus candidus et rubicundus*, to show that S. Paula, who had not shed her blood, had not the less on that account in the sight of God the merit of martyrdom.

Let us remark on this subject, that in the responsories the

\* P. xliv. 16.

† Lib. iii. Ep. vi.

repetitions are only simple returns to the preceding idea, designed to fix it in the mind ; and that the verses and responses being intended to be sung in choir by different voices, no confusion among them is possible. We should not feel surprise then if, when joined to the words that precede them, they should present an incorrect construction or an incoherent sense. To make the same phrase out of the one and the other would be to alter the idea : it would be giving it a meaning quite different to that of the Church.

#### LITTLE CHAPTERS.

The little chapters of the Office of the Blessed Virgin : *Ab initio—Et sic in Sion—In plateis* might require some explanation. But we have already pointed out the reason why the Church applies to the Mother of God that which in the first instance the Holy Ghost said of the Eternal Wisdom Who is so intimately united to her : see *The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin for the use of Seminaries*. New Edition, Poussielgue.

#### NOTE IX.—*The Sacred Books.*

#### THE LESSONS.

The Office contains more than a thousand lessons taken from Holy Writ. The Old Testament furnishes nearly eight hundred of them. If we leave out those which belong to certain festivals with which they have a connection we shall find seven hundred and fifty which follow each other in the order indicated in chapter 1st of the 11th part. The New Testament supplies nearly three hundred of them, if all are reckoned ; and only two hundred and seventy-five if we sub-

tract those proper to festivals or which belong to particular Offices.

The following table indicates, with the books which are read in the Breviary, the author, the period at which he lived, and the number of lessons borrowed from him.

# OLD TESTAMENT.

BOOK.	Date.	AUTHORS.	Number of Lessons.	Times at which read.
	B.C.			
Genesis	1450	Moses, exodus from Egypt, about 1491	36	Septuagesima.
Exodus	1450	Moses, continuation of same book	3	
I. Kings	8th Cent.	Uncertain, Samuel, for the substance	75	After Pente-
II. Kings	8th Cent.	Doubtful, Sad, or Nathan, retouched	42	[cost.
III. Kings	6th Cent.	Probably Esdras or Jeremias	42	
IV. Kings	6th Cent.	Same editor upon ancient memoirs	64	
Tobias	7th Cent.	The two Tobias, as to the body of narrative	12	September.
Judith	7th Cent.	Unknown, perhaps Eliachim	21	
Esther	480	Doubtful; Mardocai, for the substance	21	
Job	1500	Job himself, or perhaps Moses	42	
Proverbs	980	Solomon, according to title of the book	21	August.
Ecclesiastes	980	Same, according to the first verse	21	
Wisdom	200	Unknown, written in Greek	21	
Ecclesiasticus	300	Jesus, Son of Sirach, Hebrew writer	42	
Isaias	750	Of the Blood Royal, martyred by Manasses	78	Advent.
Jeremias	600	Son of Helcias, stoned at Jerusalem	18	Passiontide.
Ezechiel	575	Carried away to Babylon with Jechonias	21	November.
Daniel	570	During the Babylonian captivity	42	
Osee	765	Son of Beiri, S. Jerome calls him <i>sententiosus</i>	6	
Joel	780	Son of Phatuel, Contemporary of Osee	6	
Amos	760	A shepherd; <i>non scientia imperitus</i> —S. Jerome	3	
Abdias	725	His style recalls Jeremias	3	
Jonas	760	Prophet of Niniveh, figure of Our Saviour	3	
Micheas	724	Another Isaac of Morasthi in Judea	3	
Nahum	660	Raised up against Niniveh after Jonas	3	
Habacuc	630	Mentioned perhaps by Daniel xiv.	3	
Sophonias	600	Resembles Jeremias, seems to imitate him.	3	
Aggeus	510	Predicted the glory of the second temple	3	
Zacharias	510	Returned with Zorobabel from Babylon	3	
Malachias	420	Last of the Jewish prophets	3	
I. Machabee	125	An unknown Jew, written in Hebrew	42	October.
II. Machabee	100	Also unknown, written in Greek	42	



## NEW TESTAMENT

BOOK.	Date.	AUTHORS.	Number of Lessons.	Times at which read.
Acts	63	S. Luke, companion of S. Paul, ch. xiv., etc.	39	Paschal time. From Octve. of Xmas. to Sept.
Romans	58	S. Paul, converted an. 34, written the 6th	30	
I. Corinthians.	56	„ written 4th from Ephesus—reforms, counsels	21	
II. Corinthians.	57	„ „ 5th from Philippi, in Macedonia	21	
Galatians	55	„ „ 3rd from Ephesus, Dogma—morals	9	
Ephesians	62	„ „ 8th from Rome, first captivity	12	
Philippus.	—	„ „ 7th from Rome, pouring out of heart	6	
Colossians	—	„ „ 9th from Rome, first captivity	6	
I. Thessalons.	52	„ „ 1st from Corinth, exhortation	6	
II. Thessalons.	—	„ „ 2nd from Corinth, end of ages	3	
I. Timothy	64	„ „ 12th from Macedonia, pastoral	6	
II. Timothy	66	„ „ 14th from Rome, second captivity	6	
Titus	64	„ „ 13th from Ephesus, pastoral	6	Paschal time.
Philemon	62	„ „ 10th from Rome, first captivity	3	
Hebrews	63	„ „ 11th from Italy, first captivity	21	
S. James	60	„ „ The Less; the Just, brother of Jude	21	
I. S. Peter	65	„ „ Prince of the Apostles, martyred in 67	9	
II. S. Peter	—	„ „ visible relations with S. Jude	6	
I. S. John	92	„ „ The Evangelist, died at Ephesus about 100	12	
II. S. John	—	„ „ a simple missive to Electa	3	
S. Jude	70	„ „ Brother of S. James, relative of Jesus Christ	3	
Apocalypse.	96	„ „ S. John, Evangelist; in insula Patmos	21	

NOTE X.—*Holy Fathers' and Doctors' Lessons.*

There are in the Breviary nearly thirteen hundred Lessons taken from the Fathers, Doctors, and Ecclesiastical Writers.

We indicate in the following table all the authors referred to, the number of Lessons they supply, the title or rank which they held in the Church and the period at which each of them lived.

## THE HOLY FATHERS' AND DOCTORS' LESSONS

NAMES.	Period.	RANK AND CHURCH.	Number of Lessons.
1 S. Cyprian	A.D. 200-258	Bishop of Carthage in 248; Office, 16 Sept.	15
2 S. Hilary	300-368	Bishop of Poitiers, 350; defender of the Church against Constantius and Arians; Office, 14 January	33
3 S. Athanasius, Gr.	296-373	Patriarch of Alexandria, 326; defender of the faith against Arianism; Office, 2 May	9
4 S. Basil, Gr.	329-379	Archbishop of Cesarea, 370; Feast, 14 June	6
5 S. Cyril, Gr.	315-386	Patriarch of Jerusalem, 350; Feast, 18 Mar.	3
6 S. Gregory Nazianz, Gr.	328-389	Archbishop of Constantinople, 373; Feast, 9 May	9
7 S. Ambrose	340-397	Archbishop of Milan, 374; Office, 7 Dec.	150
8 S. Ephianus, Gr.	310-403	Archbishop of Salamis (Cyprus), 366; Office, 12 May	9
9 S. J. Chryst., Gr.	344-407	Archbishop of Constantinople, 398; Office, 27 January	117
10 S. Jerome	331-420	A simple Priest; at first Secretary of S. Damasus, then Hermit at Bethlehem; Office, 30 Sept.	129
11 S. Augustine	354-430	Bishop of Hippo, 395; Office, 28 August	363
12 S. Cyril Alexander, Gr.	365-444	Patriarch of Alexandria in 412; defender of the faith against Nestorianism; Feast, 28 January	3
13 S. Peter Chrysol.	390-452	Archbishop of Ravenna, 433; Feast, 4 Dec.	6
14 S. Maximus	390-466	Bishop of Turin, 5th Cent.; Feast, 25 June	18
15 S. Leo	390-461	Named the Great; Pope in 440; Feast, 11 April	75
16 S. Felix IV.	470-530	The Lessons for a Dedication taken from him	3
17 S. Fulgentius	468-533	Bishop of Ruspia (Africa), 508; Feast, 1 Jan.	9
18 S. Gregory the Great	540-604	At first a Monk, then Pope, 590; Office, 12 March	180
19 S. Isidore	565-636	Bishop of Seville in 601; Office, 4 April	3
20 S. Sophronius, Gr.	575-636	Patriarch of Jerusalem, 634; Feast, 11 Mar.	6
21 S. Germanus, Gr.	670-733	Patriarch of Constantinople, 715; Feast, 12 May	3
22 Ven. Bede	672-735	Monk of Jarrow (England); Feast, 27 May	57
23 S. John Damas, Gr.	676-760	Religious of Saint Sabbas (Palestine); Feast, 6 May	12
24 S. Tarasius, Gr.	760-806	Bishop of Constantinople, 784; Feast, 26 February	3
25 S. Bernard	1091-1153	Abbot of Clairvaux; last of the Fathers; Feast, 20 Aug.	42
26 S. Thomas Aquinas	1227-1274	Born in the kingdom of Naples; a Dominican, surnamed Angel of the School; Office, 7 March	6
27 S. Bernardine	1380-1444	Of Sienna; a Franciscan; Office, 20 May	3

In omnibus Honorificetur Deus per Jesum Christum.—

I. Peter iv. 2. AMEN.

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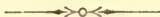
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